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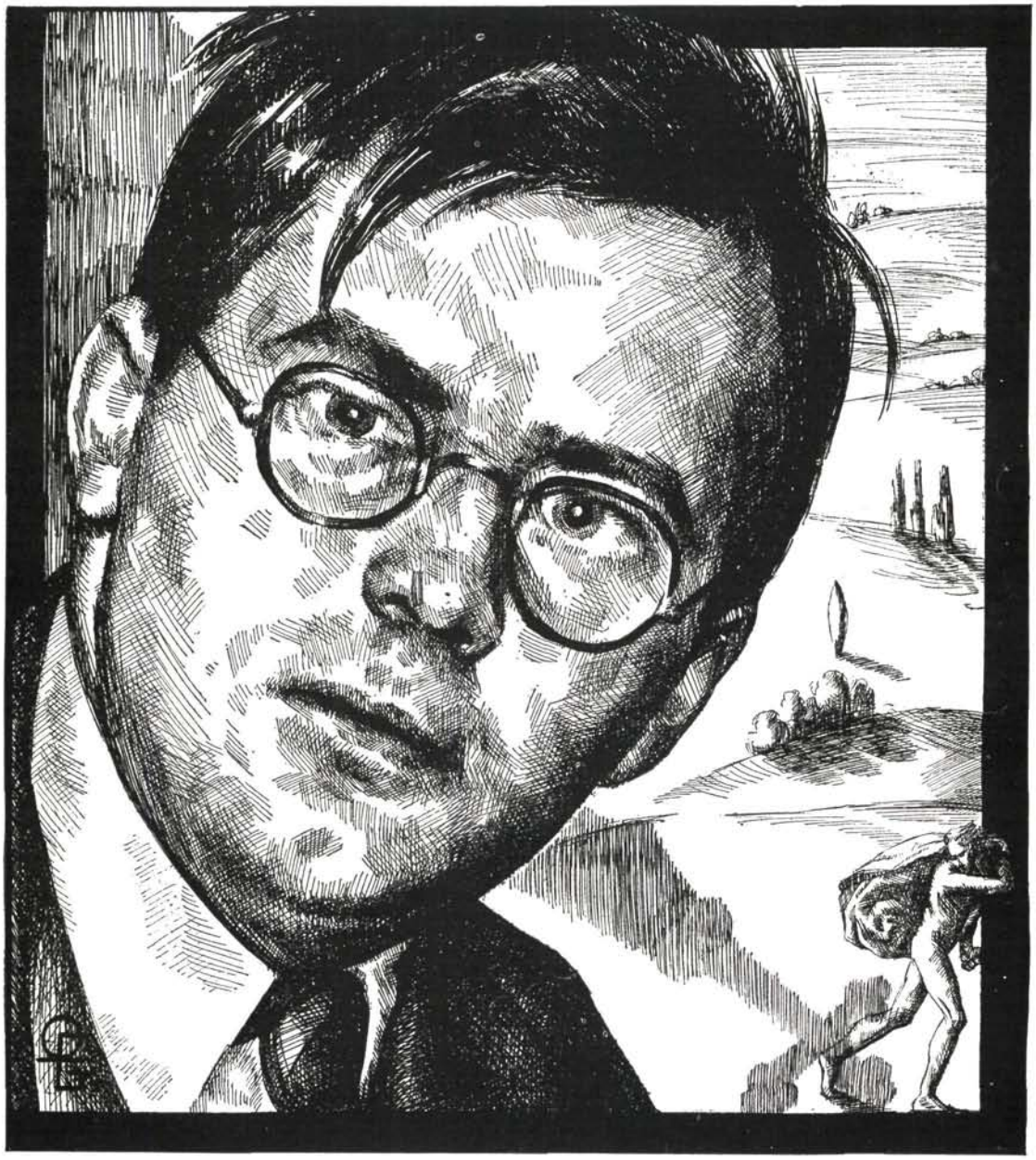

James T. Farrell, author of "Bernard Clare." *(See Page 7)*

The Public Domain of the Air

BY DIXON WECTER

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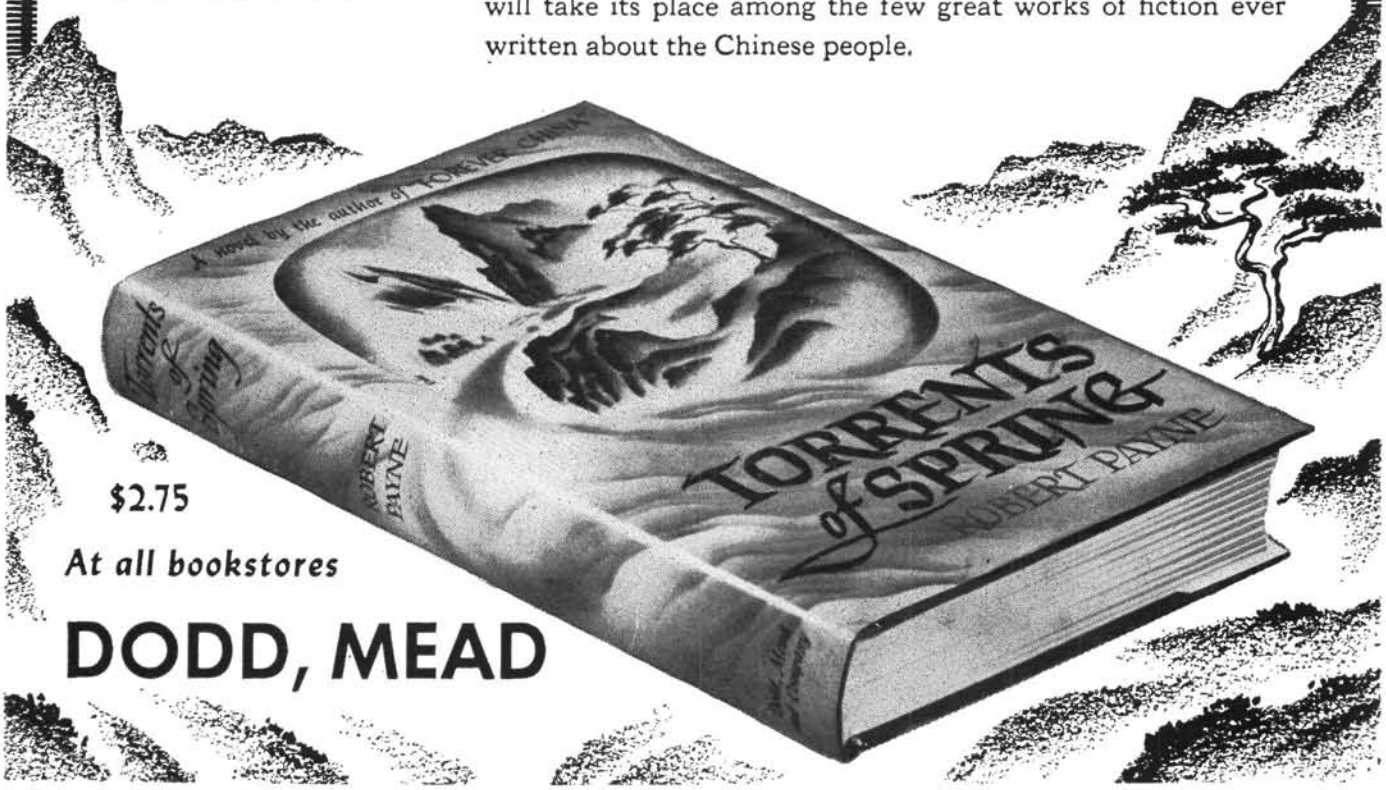

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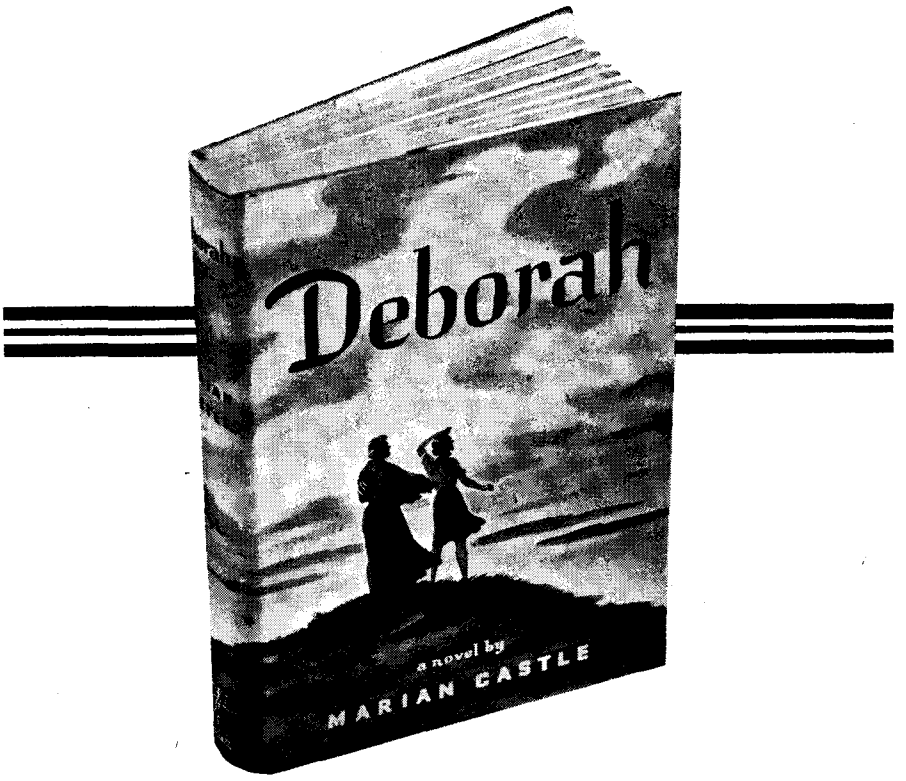

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A NOVEL

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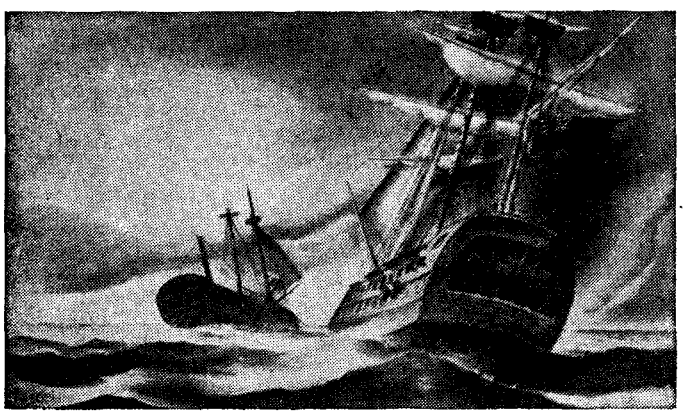
Captain Hornblower *and* History



EVER SINCE the Eighteenth Century, and almost unnoticed by literary historians, a revolution has been going on in a particular field of writing. We are referring to the field of history, which still carries an unfortunate classroom stigma in the minds of too many readers. (One kind of history, of course, has always been popular: biography). All of us can probably remember a few of the great historians' names—Gibbon, Motley, Carlyle, Prescott, Parkman, Turner and Beard—but it is only recently that any substantial number of people have been willing to read new books of history. At least in the past, the new non-academic public for books of history is the result of the pressures of our own times, the interest and even anxiety we feel in knowing how people made out in the earlier crisis periods of the world. But also, the new audience for history can be attributed to the growing number of historians who know how to think and write about the past in fresh, exciting terms which go beyond the clauses of treaties and the deaths of kings.

Probably the majority of our most widely-read modern novels are at least partly history. We will maintain, for instance, that while the sex in FOREVER AMBER is inferior to that in FANNY HILL, the history in Miss Winsor's novel is excellent, and makes the book deserve a good part of the sale it has had. For our money, no more readable historical fiction has appeared in the past decade than C. S. Forester's series of stories about Captain Horatio Hornblower of his Britannic Majesty's Navy. A new Hornblower novel is always an event in our reading life, and we retire to read it in a single gulp. We envy Messrs Little Brown the possession of Mr. Forester on their list because it must enable their editorial staff to read the new Hornblowers before we can.

This envy has recently been mitigated by our own opportunity to read first a book of history which is as exciting as any of the adventures of Mr. Forester's gallant dyspeptic. This volume, which we have just published, is Fletcher Pratt's EMPIRE AND THE SEA, and it covers much the same period as Hornblower's naval career. Specifically, it is the story of Britain's naval war against France in the thirteen year period of 1793 to 1805. "Those far-distant, storm-beaten ships on which Napoleon's soldiers never looked, stood between them and the dominion of the world," said Mahan.

Fifty years ago, critics might not even have recognized Fletcher's book as history; it does make use of the orthodox materials of the historian, but it also approaches its period as a novel would. The author has successfully set down the flavor of those times in English terms, and lighted the recesses of his material by quotations under the title of "Wrong End of the Telescope" which reveal how events in Britain appeared to foreigners:

Le Moniteur, Paris:

LONDON: *Water Down camp was greatly surprised on Tuesday night. A stray cow got entangled in the cords of one of the officer's tents, the sentinel fired, the Duke of Richmond mounted his horse half-dressed, but on inquiry, it appeared there were no Frenchmen present.*

The whole result is a book that seems to us superb history and, at the same time, magnificent reading.

For readers who missed the first volume in the Napoleonic series which Fletcher has been writing for more than a decade, we commend ROAD TO EMPIRE, a chronicle which brought Napoleon from his lowly position as an artillery captain "with hair hanging around his ears" to the moment when he became First Consul. The book, which Doubleday published years ago, is out of stock in the bookstores, but most libraries have it. Fletcher Pratt is writing other volumes in this same series, and when they are published, we predict that the readers who have followed them will await each new volume the way we wait for a new Hornblower.

Empire *and the* Sea

by Fletcher Pratt

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The Saturday Review of Literature

The Public Domain of the Air

DIXON WECTER

PUBLIC SERVICE RESPONSIBILITY OF BROADCAST LICENSEES: REPORT BY FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION. Washington, D. C. 1946. 139 *pp.*

LAST autumn American radio celebrated its silver jubilee, dating its birth as national servant from a broadcast of the Harding-Cox election returns on November 2, 1920. Whether radio has yet reached its majority, in terms of self-regulation and public trust, is another matter.

Its endless bombardment of the nation's ear—with stimuli whose chief aim is to sell the goods and occasionally the ideas of sponsors—takes seemingly little thought of public responsibility. Commissioner Durr of the Federal Communications Commission said in a recent speech that censorship by commercial domination works just as effectively as censorship by ideological suppression—indeed more so, since it rouses no protest from our watch-dogs of civil liberty. And of course there are considerations of taste. The recent campaign of the station-owning St. Louis *Post-Dispatch* against "plug-uglies" on the air resembles earlier crusades to keep the public domain from being cluttered by the excesses of American publicity. A painted sign recommending "St. Jacob's Oil" on the rocks at Niagara Falls in 1860 led the New York legislature to pass the first law restricting outdoor advertising.

Some citizens look warily upon any federal attempt to control commercialism in radio, or even a gentle reminder that the air waves *are* public property and hence to be used (as the statutory phrase runs) "in the public convenience, interest, and necessity." Colonel McCormick, a power in the Mutual network, constantly hopes that the FCC's right of review before license renewal will some day be scrapped, and "wave lengths will become property and be protected in the courts like any other property." Governor Dewey, as candidate for the Presidency, in an interview in September 1944 declared: "I believe that the FCC should have no right of censorship, that it should not control the content of radio programs. It should stay in the field of regulating technical facilities. And when the FCC starts to control program content, free radio goes out the window."

It may surprise these professed lovers of rugged individualism to know that the father of federal control over the content of radio is a former Secretary of Commerce named Herbert Hoover. His espousal of the public interest laid the basis for the present jurisdiction of the FCC. In a reminiscent broadcast during last November's silver jubilee, Mr. Hoover called himself "the first traffic cop of the broadcasting waves." His concern did not end with technical regulation, i.e., allotting frequencies and keeping one station off another's wave length. The latest document published by the FCC shows him as pioneering this concept of public responsibility. At the First Annual Radio Conference in 1922, Hoover said: "It is inconceivable that we should allow so great a possibility for service, for news, for entertainment, for education and for vital commercial purposes to be drowned in advertising chatter." With equal clarity he observed that "the dominant element for consideration in the radio field is, and always will be, the great body of the listening public, millions in number, country-wide in distribution."

THIS point of view became firmly established under the Radio Act of 1927 and the old Federal Radio Commission, which declared back in President Coolidge's day in 1928 that "broadcasting stations are licensed to serve the public and not for the purpose of furthering the private or selfish interests of individuals or groups of individuals. . . . Such benefit as is derived by advertisers must be incidental and entirely secondary to the interest of the public." A broadcasting station was regarded as a kind of community mouthpiece, for reporting news and public events, discussion of ideas, civic debate and politics, music, drama, athletics. Unlike the facilities of newsprint, the number of channels was limited, and therefore service to the public was the chief pass-key to these privileges. It was sound gospel. And since it sprang up under a Republican administration, and is in complete accord with assumptions of recent years under Democratic leadership—reflected in the Communications Act of 1934 and the past twelve years' work of the FCC—its axioms ought to be safely beyond partisan politics, despite contrary efforts by Mr. Dewey and others. The Supreme Court on May 10, 1943 upheld the FCC's obligations not merely as "a kind of traffic officer policing the wave-lengths" but as guardian of the public interest respecting "the composition of that traffic," in the phrase of Mr. Justice Frankfurter. Ever since that decision (which also upheld the Commission's attempt to break the monopoly of the Radio Corporation of America), certain network officials have professed to tremble before the tyranny of the FCC and its alleged sway over free speech.

As a matter of fact, some elements of the radio industry regard the FCC in public as an ogre, in private as a joke. Giving it the runaround is their favorite sport. Although the FCC never grants licenses for longer than

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three years, its renewal of them among the nine hundred radio stations of America has so long been taken for granted that in the spring of 1945 the refusal of one application and the granting of six others on probation gave the industry a nasty jolt. Occasional rebukes by the commissioners, followed by pious promises, absolution, and return to the fleshpots—in the manner of indulgent confessor and village rake—have become routine.

This Report begins with some prime examples. Station KIEV, Glendale, California, gained its original license at the expense of a rival house whose seventy-five per cent transcribed output it assailed as "reprehensible and inexcusable"; six years later, monitors found that over ninety-eight per cent of KIEV's daily program was platter-playing, interspersed with nearly three hundred commercials and ten minutes of lost-and-found pets. But KIEV marches on. Sponsors of Toledo's WTOL in 1938 promised that if new concessions were granted, eighty-four per cent of the evening hours would be devoted to local live talent, a field neglected by others. After eight months, WTOL joined a national web, and adopted the most profitable policy known for running a station—plugging into the network every morning, and shutting off the flow only for local spot advertising, or phonograph records sandwiched between commercials whenever a sustaining program came on the network. By 1944, nearly ninety-two per cent of all its broadcasting was commercial, with requests for free evening time by civic organizations flatly refused; during a week's survey these hours contained only two live sustaining programs—ten minutes of bowling scores and ten of sports news. KHMO, owned by the local newspaper in Mark Twain's home town, Hannibal, Missouri, won its license in competition solely because it promised about sixty per cent of its time to community interests, including "the broadcasting of daily religious services of the several Hannibal churches," and "without charge"—as noted by Judge Fred Vinson of the Federal Court of Appeals in overriding the FCC's denial of a license. A check in April 1945 showed only fourteen per cent of its programs were local; four to five hours a week of religious broadcasting did appear, but all had to be paid for at strictly commercial rates. Thus the corruption of Hadleyburg.

TEMPTATIONS are admittedly grave, because radio has become big business. Gross revenues of the industry jumped from $114 million in 1937 to $275 in 1944, while net income quadrupled, from twenty-two million to ninety. In 1937, eighty cents out of every revenue dollar was spent by networks and stations in serving the public, but in 1944 only sixty-seven cents. A good many stations are now earning from three hundred to five hundred per cent profit on their outlay. The four big networks include among their affiliates two-thirds of all radio stations in the United States. About one third of all stations have links with or ownership by newspapers, making up a publicity bloc that worries the FCC at intervals. Until recently, it was hoped that advent of Frequency Modulation would check the drift toward monopoly, but results so far have been disappointing. Commissioner Durr reports that channels are fewer than anticipated; also that the great majority of FM licensees are the same old broadcasters purveying their usual ideas

and often the same programs piped into new channels. The tonal fidelity of hillbilly music is simply much greater.

This prosperity, of course, has been built upon advertising. Here too the concentration is remarkable. In 1944, one-quarter of all the business done by Columbia came from four advertisers, and a similar percentage held with the American (or Blue) and Mutual. More than half of all broadcasting is commercially sponsored, including the most popular programs on the air. Any proposal to replace private enterprise by government subsidy, in the worthy but dull tradition of the BBC, would run counter to the American grain. The great majority of listeners want no such change. But public tolerance or apathy toward publicity-greedy sponsors helps breed abuses like those mentioned in this Report: advertising plugs running for five minutes "without program interruption of any kind," or those inserts known engagingly to the trade as "cowcatchers" and "hitch-hikers," depending upon whether they come first or last.

Since 1939 the network volume of drug and cosmetic advertising has trebled. It has become the biggest customer in the field. Advertisers make the shrewd assumption that the human voice is more persuasive than print—to the ailing, credulous, and neurotics of social inferiority. Ventilation of the more sordid ills to which flesh is heir helps to make radio the new medicine-barker of American life. (One of our seemingly national complaints, "that unpleasant full feeling," would not awaken much sympathy just now if broadcast to Europe and East Asia.)

THE industry's self-regulatory body, the National Association of Broadcasters, has been growing slowly more indulgent toward commercials during the past fifteen years. It now permits a minute and three-quarters' advertising on a five-minute program. Even so, according to FCC monitors, the NAB code is violated repeatedly on all major networks. Furthermore, the age of high frequency color television promises new horrors, such as "packages" of canned music, colored film, and narration lasting three or four minutes.

Just as advertising *per se* is no evil, neither is canned music. Transcription, as this Report observes, helps to overcome "radio's most ironic anomaly—the dissipation during a single broadcast, in most cases for all time, of all the skill and labor of writer, director, producer, and cast." But these two developments—which often go together—conspire against local live talent, to make radio little better than a common carrier for distribution of a commercial stereotype. Creativeness is kept to a minimum under the huge mechanisms of salesmanship and distribution. For every three writers employed by 834 American broadcasting stations in October 1944, there were four salesmen; for every dollar paid to a writer, a salesman got $2.39. In the whole radio industry, executives outnumber musicians and writers combined; while stenographers, clerks, and accountants are three times as numerous as actors and other artists in radio.

A recent president of the NAB told the Kiwanians of Omaha: "American radio today is the product of American business! It is just as much that kind of product as the vacuum cleaner, the washing machine, the automobile and the airplane." Glancing unregretfully at the days when radio fancied itself "artistic," he recalled that about 1935 "radio and its advertisers really began to get together." Progress began. "Many a station operator who might have had a personal preference for poetry and the opera learned some sound lessons in selling and merchandising under the tutelage of America's good, hard-headed

(*Continued on page* 36)

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The Ups and Downs of Mr. Clare

BERNARD CLARE. By James T. Farrell. New York: The Vanguard Press. 1946. 367 *pp.* $2.75.

Reviewed by BEN RAY REDMAN

WE FADE in on Bernard Clare sitting in the reading-room of the New York Public Library, busily engaged in the business of being a writer. He is also busily engaged in the business of watching himself being busily engaged in the business of being a writer; for Bernard is a self-conscious and self-dramatizing young man. He sees himself at war with "that dreaded foe of man—Time."

It is quarter after ten on a June morning, 1927, and Bernard Clare is twenty-one years old. He has left Chicago and his lower middle-class family in search of the freedom he believes essential to every artist. He is determined to be free, to "smash the past." He is also determined to be hard and cold and cynical, and to travel alone. So far, his journey has carried him as far as the Public Library and the Willis Hotel, where one can sleep for thirty-five cents a night; but he is writing a short story, a story that Mencken is almost sure to accept; and that acceptance will be only the first step of an ascent that will carry him high. His emotions are warm, his ideas confused. Contemptuous of "middle-class conventions and hypocrisy and Babbittry and the whole damned shooting match," he feels vague urges towards the Left, but these urges have no reliable motive power behind them. It is the idea of fame that really fascinates him; and with fame there will come, among other things, girls—girls like the attractive one in the chair opposite him, whom he is trying to impress by going through the motions of "a serious and disciplined writer." We have not known Bernard long before we begin to suspect that he is even more mixed-up than the average young man of his age: that he is an unhappy jumble of unintegrated elements, that he is at once offensively bumptious and tragically unsure of himself, that he is a self-deceiver and a weak-willed dreamer. But we cannot realize how sorry a case he is until we have followed him through the six months of his New York adventure.

Though it cost only thirty-five cents a night at the Willis Hotel, even that small sum had to come from somewhere, and man must eat as well as sleep; so, when the story was rejected without comment, Bernard got himself a job as a salesman in a cigar store. Naturally he was contemptuous of his job, and of the men he worked with, his ambition being to do just enough to get by; his real life being lived in his hours off duty, when he could dedicate himself to his real business of writing. But the writing seemed to end mostly in aborted paragraphs and doodles, and the cigar store became a focus of boredom. The idea of girls, at least one caressable girl, continued to obsess him, and remained only an idea, for he lacked the courage to try his hand at a pick-up, and what he could buy was not what he wanted. His sense of bafflement grew.

On the night of the execution of Sacco and Vanzetti, Bernard Clare joined the death watch in Union Square, and stared with rapt eyes at the news bulletins displayed from the windows of the Communist newspaper, yearned to hear another human being call him Comrade, and almost persuaded himself that he would have been capable of fighting the police if trouble had started. That night he felt profound upsurgings of emotion and wallowed in a bath of sentiment, but character and behavior patterns were untouched by the experience. Shortly afterwards he went to work selling space and feature listings in the Monahan "Blue Book," a business directory. His territory was Queens, and he approached his new task with misgivings, assuring himself that it was of no importance whether or not he succeeded at so unimportant a job, and then promptly contradicting himself by admitting that he really wished to make good. Luck favored him at the start, confidence grew; he soon found that he had to work only two days a week in order to make a good showing.

And the rest of the week was his to do as he chose; which meant, of course, to write. But with easy sales and comparative success there came suspicious self-distrust. Was he, after all, a Babbitt at heart? Was the bitch goddess getting him? Was he losing his artistic integrity, swerving from his dedicated path?

Bernard now had the time in which to write, but time did not transmute itself into literature. Instead, it brought him a mistress, a pleasant and passionate young wife and mother, in whose arms he found one kind of satisfaction, and in whose admiring eyes, behind which dwelt no doubts as to his genius, he found another kind. Love blossomed in the Eighth Street room to which Bernard had moved from the Willis Hotel, and in Eva's attractive Tenth Street flat. Love furnished Bernard with new and fascinating views of himself.

Love brought satisfaction, but it also brought fresh doubts. Was he not losing the freedom that was so precious to him? Or, to take another view, was he not leading a shameful life of lying and sneaking? Wasn't the only honest course to insist that Eva leave her husband and her comfortable flat, and come to him, Bernard, with her son, so that they could face the world together? Questions multiplied, but Bernard was called on to make no final decision. It was made for him, when Eva's husband returned home unexpectedly in search of a forgotten contract. After that Bernard moved into the Y.M.C.A. on 23rd Street, worked less than ever, and spent most of his time parading his sense of superiority at the expense of his fellow lodgers. Frustrated, bitter, desperately unhappy, he became increasingly objectionable, increasingly unacceptable as a member of any social group, until, at last, his great New York adventure came to a messy end in an orgy of alcohol and self-pity.

Not long before this calamitous conclusion, Bernard wrote in his diary: "I have the far-from-pleasing suspicion that I am indulging in self-dramatization and that if anyone knew of these thoughts of mine, of this diary, he would only laugh at me." It is, in fact, easy to laugh at Bernard Clare—up to a point. Indeed, it is probably fairly easy to laugh at any human being, if only one knows enough about him; and poor Bernard is stripped to our gaze. But it is also easy to be irritated by him and consequently bored by him during the greater part of his story. As Goldsmith said in a very different connection: "A book may be amusing with numerous errors, or it may be very dull without a single absurdity." There are no absurdities in "Bernard Clare," save for the pathetic-tragic

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absurdity of Bernard's adolescent character, which is the novel's basic theme; but the dullness, resulting from irritation, was for me, at least, relieved during the reading by only a few scenes: notably that in which the lovers are suprised (a remarkably effective piece of writing) and the scene of Bernard's final degradation.

I have said "during the reading," because the fact is that since finishing this novel my sense of irritation and boredom has vanished, to be replaced by a mounting appreciation of Mr. Farrell's accomplishment. A novelist can scarcely set himself a more difficult task than that of writing objectively and without comment of a protagonist who is sure to become increasingly offensive to readers who encounter him. Even an experienced reader is likely to be misled, and become impatient with the author, when his impatience should be directed against the fictitious character who has provoked it by auctorial design. In this case, he can appreciate the novelist's achievement—if there is an achievement—only in retrospect. That Mr. Farrell has successfully done the difficult thing he purposed to do, I now have little doubt. Whether or not he chooses to continue the history of Bernard Clare, he has already created in him a character that is at once an individual and a type; a character into which life has been breathed, who need only be known not to be forgotten. If it turns out that Mr. Farrell's creation does not give immediate pleasure to many readers, it will not mean that the creator has failed. "Bernard Clare" (in retrospect, mind you) is a novel that could have been written only by a novelist of substantial talent and assimilated experience.

Well-Controlled Anger

A HOUSE IN THE UPLANDS. By Erskine Caldwell. New York: Duell, Sloan & Pearce, Inc. 1946. 238 *pp.* $2.50.

Reviewed by HARRISON SMITH

IN Erskine Caldwell's latest novel he abandons the poor white trash, who have furnished him with characters and plots for his satirical and possibly libelous novels of Southern life, for the equally desperate poor-white aristocracy. Since "Tobacco Road," written in 1932, was turned into a brave and bitter drama intended for the intellectuals, to wind up as a bawdy and timeless successor to "Uncle Tom's Cabin," Mr. Caldwell has written seven novels, creating stereotyped human beings who have become the familiar subjects for cartoonists and the advertisers of Cream of Wheat. All of us know them and the miserable shacks on the edge of an arid field that are supposed to shelter them; we know the randy old grandma, with two teeth in her head clinging to a corncob pipe; pappy, all ribs, ramshackly legs, and a pair of torn pants; we know voluptuous little Judy, a juvenile delinquent at fourteen, a hag at twenty-two, and we know what is going to happen to all of them in almost any of Mr. Caldwell's novels, from that masterpiece of uncensored melodrama, "God's Little Acre" to "Tragic Ground," his last year's saga of white poverty in the South.

What we don't know, and will doubtless never know, is whether these incredible products of the hookworm and the hired cotton field that he has invented have ever existed in human form. Let us say that they were the creation of a talented writer who was so filled with compassion for poor whites and with hatred for the conditions that produced them that he deliberately made them objects of ridicule. It is easier to laugh at a blind man falling safely on his face at the curb than it is to weep, though both are the products of outraged pity. But at some time or other Mr. Caldwell had to call a halt to his hookworm novels; he had set them on the edge of the industrial South, in the barren lowlands, and in the freer air of the famished hills, and always with grandma, pappy, and the sexually starved youths surrounding little Judy, who always provided them with the drama of her surrenders.

—*Reed*

"Erskine Caldwell has changed his tune with no profit to his art."

From the theme of "A House in the Uplands" it is obvious that Mr. Caldwell had come to the end of his rope. But, what is the result of his moving from his poor white trash to the thin end of Southern aristocracy? It is a bitter, dramatic novel, written in crisp language and easily divisible into three acts, as if he hoped that at last Broadway and Hollywood might be interested. It is an "Uncle Tom's Cabin" rewritten for today. In 1946, the elegant and wealthy St. Claire of Mrs. Stowe's novel has become a debauched, sadistic, plantation owner whose fields and house are mortgaged to the hilt. Uncle Tom has become the pitiful grandson of a slave who cannot escape from the white master for whose family he has worked without pay all his life. The black or mulatto women who are the servants and field workers are frightened to death of this bankrupt aristocrat and yield to his fantasies as they have to his father's. Little Eva has become in an easy transition the neglected child-wife, and Simon Legree has been changed almost out of recognition to a frightened plantation manager, born on the wrong side of the fence, whose son is in love with the master's wife. But Harriet Beecher Stowe, bless her innocent 1852 heart, could never have invented the Northern crook, whose successful bawdy-house and gambling den corrupted town justice, and who brought down the scion of generations of plantation owners with a bullet in his black insides.

It is sad to have to say that Erskine Caldwell has changed his tune with no profit to his art. Nor can he continue on this new road for very long. Surely the number of sadistic, broken ex-aristocrats whose goings-on are tolerated by the neighbors must be as severely limited as the white hookworm victims are numberless. Let us grant Mr. Caldwell one more novel on this new theme and after that he will have to return to his original victims, grandma, pappy, little Judy, and the delinquent boys. Or if that is no longer commercially possible, he might look around him at the struggling, mighty colored people of the South.

There is no single laugh, covert or otherwise, in "A House in the Uplands." When Mr. Caldwell settles finally down to the great theme which he must eventually undertake, he will find no laughter there, either. We can imagine that he might be now through with the clever device of humorous satire and sex on a broken bed, which has covered what his publisher rightly calls "a controlled and

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deadly anger at a world which allows such poverty to exist." The anger is still there, strong enough, and the gift for terse characterization and intense drama. This new theme to which we might commend Mr. Caldwell is limitless; he can never come to the end of it. And let us hope that the symbols of Southern poverty and negligence he has created (not William Faulkner or any other Southern writer) will finally disappear from the newspapers and comic sheets of this country.

A joke is a joke, to be sure, Mr. Caldwell, but the hunger and lack of education of the underprivileged white population of the South are slowly, let us hope, being remedied. They are no longer subjects for the satirical novelist, or the comic draftsman, but for the investigator and the social worker. Racial prejudice remains. Twelve million colored people of the South remain subject to dangerous economic hazards in the next decade. Give up grandpappy and little Julie, Mr. Caldwell, and go to work on something worthwhile. You have been a powerful propagandist, disguised as a novelist and satirist. Get to work!

O'Hara in His Time

HERE'S O'HARA. By John O'Hara. New York: Duell, Sloan & Pearce. 1946. 440 pp. $3.

Reviewed by HENRY MORTON ROBINSON

SOMETIMES when you hear the twittering voices of lady-writers jamming the ether with their too, too sensitive echoes of Katherine Anne Mansfield (or was the lady's last name Porter?) you get kind of lonesome and wish you were in another line of business, like taxidermy say, where the difference between a stuffed *poitrine* and the genuine article is immediately clear to the customers. At such moments you feel pretty low, and tell yourself that maybe the art and practice of virile letters died with Tom Wolfe or maybe James Joyce. Then just about that time along comes a collection of John O'Hara's works. You read your favorite pieces all over again, and feel revived enough to summon out the mains and semi-mains to announce that God has been very generous to American literature in general, and most generous to Mr. O'Hara in particular.

For the fact is that John O'Hara has more talent and energy in his little colon than any dozen lady-writers of both sexes have in their entire viscera. This is not to say that O'Hara belongs solely to the gutsy school. He can embroider as fine a seam as Evelyn Waugh or Eudora Welty or any of those other cambric artists you care to mention. "Do You Like It Here?", the story of a schoolboy being put upon by a loathsome sub-master, is sewn with consummate feather-stitching right into the lining of your heart—which incidentally is the organ that O'Hara goes for most often and mercilessly, no matter how hardboiled a lot of people claim him to be.

He is hardboiled, of course, if by hardboiled you mean unsentimental,

"No literary assessor in his right mind can find serious fault in John O'Hara's work."

tough-fibered, and cruelly satirical in portraying the pastimes, occupations, speech, morals, fears, and frustrations of contemporary life. The social historian of the future, delving into the third and fourth decades of our century, will find in John O'Hara's work a teeming index of American manners, events, and characters. And all in the main stream. No local color vignettes of the Deep South, or quaint crusty sketches of upstate Vermont, or ox-slow studies of Middlewestern Swedes. Mr. O'Hara avoids the out-of-the-way places that you would avoid yourself—and for the same reasons. Whether he writes of Hollywood cafes, Third Avenue bars, Chicago joints, or Eastern country clubs, he contrives to make the axis of the world pass through that particular spot. Parish writers seem awfully parochial after you read O'Hara.

This is the place to say that any reviewer of Mr. O'Hara finds himself on something of a spot. One cannot at this late date "discover" him, and it would be critically unprofitable to repeat in scrannel phrases the large choruses chanted to O'Hara's fame. On the other hand, no literary assessor in his right mind can find serious fault in the man's work. This reviewer, therefore, being in the grip of a mad fascination for anything O'Hara writes, must have recourse to the old trick of picking birdshot out of the caviar.

O'Hara's special gift, as anyone with half an ear will tell you, is his faculty for catching the shape, tempo, and color of American words as they leave the speaker's mouth. Hot, sweet, cold, or poisonous, the words are captured alive and wriggling—not as people actually talk, but as a master dialogue-writer makes them talk—by adding only imagination, energy, and dramatic construction (try and do it) to the banalities of common speech. This is such a tempting diversion that Mr. O'Hara sometimes gets bemused by his own virtuosity, just as the best piano player in the world might conceivably attempt—just for the fun of it—to use nothing but the black keys. O'Hara's marvelous ear gets so fascinated by the counterpoint of his art that he sometimes seems to be writing dialogue for his own amusement. Watch this, Mr. O'Hara, or they'll be calling you a solipsist—which means a guy who plays to himself nine to the bar on black keys only.

Another risk that this master runs is the danger of being tagged as the celebrater of an age already dead. Certainly one cannot reread "Butterfield 8" without a nostalgic sigh, not so much for the speakeasy period itself as for the fidelity with which Mr. O'Hara has set down its citizens and decor. With this huge monument behind him, can Mr. O'Hara ever quite escape from its shadow? One observes something of the speakeasy penumbra hanging over Mr. O'Hara's numerous stories about drinking places. For example, his upper Broadway lunchroom in "Where's The Game?" has the smell and lighting of a speakeasy. Perhaps it doesn't make any difference (the story itself is a masterpiece of pity and terror) but it would be a sign of the artist's self-renewing energy if he could emerge from its lengthening shadows of the speak.

These are indeed small shot to be raking out of a marvelous collection that includes the incomparable "Pal Joey" and twenty-five magnificent short stories. Whoever assembled the collection (Mr. O'Hara says in his preface that he had nothing to do with it) has managed to emphasize the latent poetry in Mr. O'Hara's makeup.

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Benign Indifference

THE STRANGER. By Albert Camus. Translated by Stuart Gilbert. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. 1946. 154 *pp.* $2.

Reviewed by RICHARD PLANT

ON THE surface, this is a simple, fast-moving story with a murder plot. A young French shipping clerk in Algiers comes home from his mother's funeral. The next day he meets a girl. They spend the day and part of the night together. The clerk agrees to write a threatening letter to the girl friend of his neighbor, Raymond, a shoddy character who is no good at writing. The clerk becomes involved in the feud between the girl's Arab brother and Raymond. The brother and his Arab pals follow the two Frenchmen to the beach where Raymond's friend has a cottage. There is a fight in which Raymond is wounded. He gives his revolver to his young friend, who during a walk on the beach kills one of the Arabs. Follow arrest, imprisonment, trial. He is indicted for murder in the first degree. That's all.

I don't think it would help to delve into the depths of that modern philosophy, existentialism, extricate its essential traits, and see whether they can be applied to the story. M. Camus may be an existentialist, but his novel can be enjoyed and interpreted without assistance from the heavy guns of that school. For "The Stranger" is a brilliant story in the great tradition of the European "novella," deceptively simple and so ambiguous that it truly could be called an interpreter's holiday.

The hero's philosophy—if one can call it that—is, so it seems, nothing but a rationalization of his sublime indifference, his moral insensibility. It amounts to a radical fatalism: whatever a man does makes no difference. When his girl asks him to marry her, he agrees but won't say he loves her. He writes the threatening letter for Raymond, whom he neither likes nor dislikes, because it is easier to say yes than no. These actions—or the lack of them—are accompanied by reflections which show the hero's complete determinism. What must happen will happen, and M. Camus makes his point only more explicit by letting his young man phrase his maxims in such a hackneyed way that they sound like cliches.

Now, to make the problem more puzzling, Camus's hero is definitely concerned with certain things, and if one starts analyzing these things one finds that they are those that appeal to his elementary instincts. His animal instincts are nicely developed. The heat, the smells, the faces of his mother's friends, the sharp light in the morgue, the taste of coffee, or a girl's embrace—all this he notes with extraordinary sharpness. He enjoys good food, wine, and sex. Yet he is absolutely isolated: he has no contact whatsoever with other people. He is stricken with an emotional and intellectual insensibility which turns life into a complete riddle, governed by patterns and codes which to him are radically incomprehensible.

This is an excellent piece of short fiction, in the classic French tradition. Like many French novelists before him, Camus excells in delineating the narrowness of French provincial life. The handling of the shooting on the beach would almost serve as a model to many American writers of the tough school. The trial itself is reported with a detached irony which makes the underlying horror only the more noticeable. Stuart Gilbert's translation merits unreserved praise. Camus emerges as a master craftsman who never wastes a word.

Robert Camus's "'The Stranger' is a brilliant story in the great tradition of the European 'novella,' deceptively simple."

Your Literary I.Q.

By Howard Collins

KEYWORDS IN SIMILES

This week's quiz is the inspiration of Mrs. Lucy Newell, of Napa, California. In each of the twenty similes quoted below, the key-word has been omitted. Can you supply it? Allowing 5 points for each correct answer, a score of 60 is par, 70 is very good, 80 or better is excellent. Answers are on page 28.

1. For very young he seemed, tenderly reared,
   Like some young ....., tall, and dark and straight.
2. And green and blue his sharp eyes twinkled,
   Like a ..... where salt is sprinkled.
3. But pleasures are like ..... spread,
   You seize the flow'r, its bloom is shed.
4. She walks in beauty, like the .....
   Of cloudless climes and starry skies.
5. My master comes like any ..... and bangs me most severely.
6. Twinkle, twinkle, little bat! How I wonder what you're at!
   Up above the world you fly, like a ..... in the sky!
7. They stamped about and tramped about that mud, till all the troupe
   Made noises, as they ramped about, like ..... eating soup.
8. The Wedding Guest stood still, and listens like a .....
9. There is no frigate like a ..... to take us lands away.
10. I came like Water, and like ..... I go.
11. Then felt I like some ..... of the skies
    When a new planet sweeps into his ken.
12. Blue were her eyes as the ....., her cheeks like the dawn of the day.
13. His eyes, how they twinkled! his dimples, how merry!
    His cheeks were like roses, his nose like a .....
14. A needless Alexandrine ends the song,
    That like a wounded ....., drags its slow length along.
15. Her hair that lay along her back was yellow like ripe .....
16. Life, like a ..... of many-coloured glass,
    Stains the white radiance of Eternity.
17. Her feet beneath her petticoat, like little ....., stole in and out.
18. And like a downward ....., the slender stream
    Along the cliff to fall and pause and fall did seem.
19. But each man's heart beat thick and quick, like a ..... on a drum!
20. It is a beauteous evening, calm and free.
    The holy time is quiet as a .....

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Prototype of Social Planners

BEATRICE WEBB. By Margaret Cole. New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co. 1946. 222 pp. $3.

Reviewed by MARK STARR

THIS widely noticed biography of Beatrice Webb—claimed by George Bernard Shaw to be "the most interesting and important English life story of the year"—now appears in the United States where the great Fabians, Beatrice and Sidney Webb, were not as well known as their Irish colleague. Margaret Cole has given us something better than a definitive, documented, bulky volume in this very human portrait sketch of one great woman by a pupil who ran her intellectual errands for many years.

When one capable woman writes about another, it is sometimes a labor of learning rather than of love. But Margaret Cole was close enough to Beatrice Webb to know her failings, her bossiness, and her inability to suffer fools gladly as well as to admire her disinterested scholarship. She has read the copious diaries of Beatrice Webb with deep and special insight.

Beatrice Webb was a woman celebrity of a new type. She could have been, as the daughter of a captain of industry, a pioneering business leader, but she was too big for that. Through her old nurse she became interested in how factory workers lived and this spoiled her for remaining content as a social worker for the Charity Organization Society, picking out "the deserving sheep from the undeserving goats." She even sewed men's pants to get some actual experience to use in her investigation presented to the House of Lords Select Committee on the Sweating System.

To meet Beatrice and Sidney Webb, because it is impossible to think of them separately, at Labor Party conferences was an anticlimax to the expectation aroused by their great compendious volumes on the trade union history, on the ways and methods of trade union procedures, on the coöperative movement and similar subjects. Here was short, gnome-like Sidney with a goatee beard accompanied by an ethereal frail woman apparently headed for the old folks' home. Never were stormers of a collectivist heaven so physically unimpressive. Nevertheless, one and one made eleven when Beatrice Potter and Sidney Webb decided to unite their fortunes, to forswear all progeny except those children of the mind to fill the library shelf, and to participate tirelessly in local government, committees, and commissions which most people found dull and wearisome. Some people sneered at the Webbs as being merely inspired filing cases, but they were much more than that, for action followed their investigations.

Among the many interesting personal touches in the book are the relationship of Beatrice to Herbert Spencer ("whose theories of political society are now little more than academic dodos preserved in American university courses"); her inability to appreciate poetry ("which seemed to her, generally speaking, nonsense, deliberate putting of words in the wrong order for no discoverable purpose"); the priceless story of how Sidney Webb reported that he and Beatrice had a good time at the opera, "Parsifal," because "our seats were just behind Herbert Samuel's and during the interval we had a very interesting discussion of the incidence of sickness during pregnancy." All this adds a lively human touch despite the fact that Beatrice and her husband always saw movements and social forces and not individual people in their planning.

Collectivism, as expressed by the Webbs, was the civil service view of society. Competition was the bugbear. Despite the investigations made by the Webbs into the industrial democracy of the trade unions, they wished the consumer to be the basis of a reorganized social system. They had no sympathy with workers' control either in terms of revolt, as preached by the Syndicalists, or as expounded in drawing rooms and academic circles by the National Guildsman.

From the photo by G. Bernard Shaw

Beatrice Webb and her husband "always saw movements and social forces and not individual people in their planning."

The life story of Beatrice Webb provokes comparisons with the United States in the matter of the place of Socialism and the intellectual in our political life. In Britain Socialists go to Buckingham Palace and give orders, but in the United States we are inclined to send them to Bellevue. In Britain acknowledged Socialists form the government and the trade union leaders there see planning and freedom as indivisible. In the United States even our advanced New Dealers, such as Henry Wallace, and our trade union leaders must always pay their respects to free enterprise before they plead for any mild social regulation of monopoly.

We have had no Fabian Society in this country, to our loss. Of course, the Webbs were pale statisticians with little red blood in their veins and with actual dislike for the strikes which accompanied the industrial unrest in the eighties and, more particularly, in the first decade of the twentieth century. They chose their name advisedly because Fabius was the general who wore his enemy down and who was always going to fight tomorrow. The Fabians, it might be argued, were not really Socialists; they represented the breakdown of rugged individualism and were effective advocates of collectivism. They bored from within. Their weapons were blue books and government reports. They were prepared to penetrate the Conservative as well as the Liberal Party with their plans. They stole upon Whitehall in gum-soled shoes, attracting a minimum of attention. They expressed the desires of the small middle class crowded between the monopolists on the one hand and the organized labor movement on the other. Maybe in the present political ferment—accentuated by the urgencies of the atomic age—among our scientists, writers, artists, and economists, we may divine similar hopeful portents.

SOLUTION OF LAST WEEK'S DOUBLE-CROSTIC (No. 633)

BETTY MACDONALD

THE EGG AND I

I learned the meaning of a great many homely phrases that first spring and summer. Things like "Shoulder to the wheel". . . meant actually my shoulder to the wheel of the truck while Bob raced the motor and tried to pull it out of a hole.

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The Death Blow in the West

THE LAST PHASE: The Allied Victory in Western Europe. By Walter Millis. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company. 1946. 130 *pp.* $2.50.

Reviewed by MARK S. WATSON

TUESDAY of last week was the anniversary of the surrender, to the Supreme Allied Command and the Soviet High Command, of all Germany's remaining forces on land, sea, and in the air. In timely manner it also brought to publication a survey of the Allies' victory in the West, and of the manner and basic causes of its achievement, discerning in the survey's over-all scope despite its tight compression, and judicious in its appraisals of the part which the splendid success in the West represented in the United Nations' whole vast task of crushing Germany. Thereby it shines by contrast with the excited over-emphasis, the bad perspective, and the downright inaccuracy of hastily devised war-books which have been tumbling from the presses. Also it shines by reason of Mr. Walter Millis's own admirable style.

It is a short book, with pictures and a few boldly designed maps occupying a third of its small total of pages. This was purposeful, for the original aim was distribution in conquered Germany, for the reëducation of a population which would instinctively suspect the statements in any book of enemy origin, and also (in the case of ex-soldiers) alert against the slightest error, however innocent, in recording war events which those ex-soldiers would well remember from their own experience. In its preparation there was therefore a special stimulus toward readability, a truly meticulous accuracy, a high degree of objectivity, and a scrupulous fairness toward our Allies, and for that matter toward our late foes.

The result is a book which, despite its small compass, does more than select the dominant factors of victory and a few spectacular feats along the way. It places them in perspective and, most important, relates the Anglo-American Western Front campaign to other great factors in the victory. Of those other great factors, and of some of the greatest, unhappily the American public already must be reminded. Thus Mr. Millis notes, to our benefit, that glorious as was the war in the West, far greater numbers of men were arrayed on the Eastern front, inflicting and sustaining far greater casualties. He touches on the harassment of German armies by the French patriots, with its great diversionary aid to our own enterprise. He deals with the gallant work of Montgomery's British and Canadians in absorbing such bitter punishment around Caen that Bradley's forces were more nearly free for their magnificent achievements beyond St. Lo; later he deals with effectiveness of the Britons' swift dash across northern Belgium to the all-important line of the Scheldt, too rarely remembered in America. The narrative deals chiefly with the American performance, so massive that it does not suffer in any comparison, but it does so with sound perspective and with a constant awareness that this was an Alliance at work.

Walter Millis's "book says a great deal which needs to be said."

Mr. Millis stresses the large responsibility which the German command —military as well as political—had in the completeness of its own defeat. But there will be interest in a thesis which is not commonly advanced, and which merits close examination by military historians. This thesis is that after the appalling defeat which German strategy and tactics sustained in Normandy (largely because of the "piecemeal" resistance offered in zones which were undefendable by that method) the new German strategy called for a swift but well executed retreat to the Scheldt-Albert Canal-Westwall line. Says Mr. Millis:

> If the retreat were rapid enough, the Allies would outrun their communications; meanwhile the garrisons left in the western ports would deny to them the harbor facilities they would urgently need to sustain their offensive. Behind the shelter of the Westwall German armies would reorganize. . . .
>
> The Allied press quite naturally reported the events of late August and September in terms of sweeping "victories"; it is much more accurate to describe them in terms of a masterly withdrawal. . . . The German formations fell back into place as accurately as the parts in a picture puzzle, each covering another as they withdrew. . . . The Allies had nowhere succeeded in cutting off any important enemy formations. . . . Many of (the prisoners) represented administrative and line-of-communications personnel, the labor battalions and the Todt organization workers who were everywhere ruthlessly abandoned.

Those of us who accompanied Bradley's forces in their dash eastward will take a hearty exception to that denial of *any* important enemy formation, but Mr. Millis's main thesis will stand, and should help to straighten out some of the too-sure judgments which were current in late 1944 and thereafter.

Those who were with the First Army, in contact with the unspectacular but highly competent General Hodges, will welcome this well-balanced account of the Ardennes battle, and its sound estimate of it both as a reckless German gamble conducted with great skill, and as the end of Germany's hopes in the West.

In the small space available to him Mr. Millis deals wisely with both the sum and the parts; with the Allied Ground Forces, with the tide-turning Air Forces, with the indispensable Navies, with the campaigns in Africa and the Mediterranean, with the "unbroken resistance of the British people throughout that year in which they stood alone," with the Allies' stupendous industrial resources. The invasion itself, he says, with much more modesty than most of us would employ, "was in its fundamental conception simply a gigantic diversionary operation. Yet it was the vital additional factor which broke what might otherwise have been a stalemate, and so made good the immense efforts and sacrifices of the Russian armies and peoples; in this sense, it was the crucial factor."

Germany's failure in the west he attributes not only to the Allies' technical, material, and manpower resources, but to the German war blunders; their underestimate of our resources, our skill, and our determination; their awful underestimate of our new air arm; their failure to adopt a plan and stick to it; but chiefly to their moral, political, and economic incompetence.

For so small a book this says a great deal which needs to be said—chiefly on the subject of that coöperation among United Nations which won the war. A continuation of that same coöperation might win the peace, too.

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Argentina in the Axis Orbit

BLUE BOOK ON ARGENTINA. United States Government Official Indictment of the Fascist Regime in Argentina. New York: Greenberg Publisher. 1946. 58 pp. $1.

Reviewed by STEPHEN NAFT

LESS than two weeks before the Argentine presidential elections which gave the government candidate, Colonel Juan D. Peron, a slight majority of the general vote and an overwhelming majority of the electors, our State Department released an official memorandum on Argentina's coöperation with the Axis powers, prepared by the Assistant Secretary of State in charge of Latin American Affairs, Spruille Braden, former Ambassador to Argentina. The next morning most of the large Buenos Aires dailies published nearly the entire text in Spanish. This caused an extraordinary sensation throughout Latin America and, as was expected, considerable embarrassment to the Argentine pro-Fascist government.

The statements in this document are based not merely on complaints of Peron's liberal opponents or on reports of American correspondents or news services, but on information gathered from Foreign Office papers seized in Germany and from captured Axis officials who had been active in Argentina.

The information published in the Blue Book proves conclusively that members of the Argentine government collaborated with Axis agents for important espionage, to the detriment of the United Nations; that Nazi leaders, groups, and organizations have combined with similar Argentine groups to create a Nazi-Fascist state in that country; that members of the present Argentine government conspired with Nazis to undermine governments of neighboring countries in order to destroy their collaboration with the Allies; that the Argentine government tried to obtain arms from the German government, and that it protected the enemies of the United Nations, to preserve their economic and industrial power in Argentina.

The memorandum comes to the conclusion that Argentina's pledge to coöperate with the other American republics, given at the Inter-American Conference on Problems of War and Peace held in Mexico at the beginning of 1945, was made deliberately as a blind for coöperation with the Axis interests. It reveals that elements controlling the present Argentine government, with Nazi help spread totalitarian propaganda in neighboring states for the purpose of forming a pro-Axis bloc in South America. The ultimate aim was to absorb or include Bolivia, Paraguay, Uruguay, Chile, and possibly later also Brazil (through the help of its native Intergralists) in a South American totalitarian union under Argentine hegemony, in opposition to the United States.

That these aspirations were not just the pipe-dreams of a few irresponsible fanatics appears from the concrete fact of Argentina's feverish rearmament, the establishment of strong garrisons on the Chilean, Bolivian, and Brazilian frontiers, and the disproportionate expenditures for military purposes last year. While the military expenditures for 1941 were 298 million pesos, those for 1945 amounted to 1,428 million pesos, or almost five times as much. As the ordinary revenue estimated in the budget for 1945 amounted to only 1,355 million pesos, the military expenditures during that year thus comprised approximately 105 per cent of the total ordinary revenue. The balance and the needs for non-military expenditures will probably have to be covered by loans.

One section of the book gives details about the destruction of the free labor organizations of Argentina and their transformation into a totalitarian-style "Labor Front" with government appointed officials. The police force of Buenos Aires is now almost as large as that of New York, which has more than three times as many inhabitants.

Argentina's symbolic declaration of war against the Axis in March 1945 gave the government a welcome pretext for declaring a state of siege, authorizing it to suppress the shrunken remnant of civil liberties, prohibiting all propaganda by opponents of the present regime. And though the elections held at the end of February did not follow the totalitarian pattern of only one candidate on the list and the ballot, all demonstrations or rallies for the anti-Peron candidates were attacked by followers of Peron and dispersed.

—Fitzpatrick in the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*

A Tree Grows in Argentina.

Nevertheless even the opposition concedes that the elections were more or less honest and recognizes the victory of Peron, who will be president for the next six years—unless another army revolt overthrows him.

In spite of the importance of all these facts, it is difficult to decide whether the publication of the Blue Book was opportune and appropriate. Many in Latin America considered its publication as an attempt to influence the elections, and thus a direct interference in the internal affairs of a Latin American country. The United States remains in a dilemma. If it intervenes in Argentina it is violating the spirit of Pan-Americanism and its pledge of non-intervention, but if it allows the Fascists to establish themselves in Latin America it betrays its friends in the southern half of this hemisphere and endangers its own safety.

The Argentine government issued two months later a denial of the statements contained in the memorandum, but the facts speak for themselves. The Peron regime is entirely different from former traditional South American military dictatorships. Unlike them, it was built on a mass basis similar to the European totalitarian movements. It follows faithfully the pattern of Fascist and Nazi movements by promising or giving the workers concessions at the expense of the industrialists and landowners. For example, Peron has imposed considerable rent reductions and forced the industrialists to grant the workers a thirty per cent wage increase and one month's paid vacation. Though such concessions may be short lived, workers have flocked in great numbers to Peron's "Partido Laborista."

The publication of Peron's answer was undoubtedly delayed in order to let the elections "prove" that the present regime is accepted by the majority of the Argentine people. Most Latin American countries have accepted Peron's victory as the result of free elections, and the State Department has been compelled to change its uncompromising attitude.

Thus the Blue Book—though its revelations are shockingly true—was no diplomatic success.

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Fashions in Dying

HO FOR HEAVEN! Man's Changing Attitude Toward Dying. By Virginia Moore. New York: E. P. Dutton and Company. 1946. 282 *pp.* $3.

Reviewed by THOMAS SUGRUE

WHEN the disciples of the Chinese philosopher Chuang-Tze expressed to him, as he lay dying, their desire to give him a lavish funeral, the wise man said, "With heaven and earth for my coffin and shell, with the sun, moon and stars as my burial regalia, and with all creation to escort me to my grave, are not my funeral paraphernalia ready to hand?" That was long ago, in the time when man regarded life as no more than an excursion from heaven, to be accepted with grace and executed with fidelity. Since then, as Virginia Moore points out, man's notion of himself has changed, and with it his notion of death.

There are, says Miss Moore, fashions in dying as well as in living, and because death is the climax toward which every person moves, the manner in which he plays that scene is a key to the true nature of his heart and mind. "I go to seek the great Perhaps," said François Rabelais, who was a greater man than all the monks he cut with the rapier of his wit. Then he added," Draw the curtain. The farce is over." Queen Elizabeth cried out in anguish, "All my possessions for a moment of time!" But St. Teresa of Avila said, "How I have longed for thee! O welcome hour—the end of exile!" Heine said, "God will pardon me. That is his *métier*." Goethe's mother wrote to a friend, in answer to an invitation, "I must ask to be excused, as I have to die."

In the early days of humanity, says Miss Moore, man knew more about God than he did about himself. Involution, or the process by which divine mind is extended into matter, was being completed. Self-consciousness, by which evolution proceeds, was in a raw state. (Historians and scientists, who disregard involution, will have no use for this portion of Miss Moore's thesis, but she is philosophically sound.) Thus death for the early Chinese and Hindus was a close and friendly thing; the act itself was no more than a returning home after labor in the fields. It was the discovery of evil which brought about the first complications. In Persia Ahriman, the angel of darkness, fought against Ahura Mazda, the god of light, for the souls of men. It was necessary to take precautions—magic and morality—lest heaven be lost. Man was finding it more difficult to find his way back home, for in his consciousness he was further away from it. He needed guidance; he needed an instrument of perception and understanding.

In Egypt the instrument was employed, in Greece it was perfected. Reason told man who he was, and pointed out his destiny. But the image of himself was so provoking in its promises that soon the destiny was forgotten. The Roman citizen enjoyed himself and the world; death was an exile from life, an event to be mourned. Involution had struck bottom. There was no way to go but up. Said Cato the Younger as he prepared to fall on his sword, "Now I am master of myself." Jesus said, "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit." The way was opened; the example was before every man.

Then for centuries the Christian was like the Good Thief; in an instant he wished to snatch heaven. He abhorred the earth, despised the environment in which God had placed him, and sought to escape it. Said Julian the Apostate, "Thou hast conquered, O pale Galilean!" Said King Arthur, "Pray for my soul." But Peter Abelard, honest to the end, said, "I don't know. I don't know." Then came the Renaissance, and man's discovery that he is meant to find joy in creation just as God, Who made him, finds joy in it. "The Gospel of the Father is past, the Gospel of the Son is passing, the Gospel of the Spirit is to be," said Joachim of Flora. Life itself became a great and wondrous adventure, and Elizabethan England enjoyed it thoroughly. When the headsman was dissatisfied with the way Sir Walter Raleigh's head fitted the block, the good knight said, "What matter how the head lies, so the heart be right?" Said Descartes, "My soul, you have long been held captive. The time has come to leave thy prison . . . Then suffer the separation with joy and courage."

"Virginia Moore is a skillful, intelligent writer, concerned with . . . style and thought."

The 18th Century was bemused by the idea that life is a stage. It played a part at all times, and particularly strove to excel in the climax of death. Deathbed scenes abound in the literature of that curious hundred years; advice was given on dying as in our day it is given on marriage. Everyone tried to make a memorable exit. John Donne sat for a portrait in his grave clothes, then lay in his coffin to wait for death. In Paris as the priest rose to leave the dying Madame de Pompadour she said, "One moment, Monsieur le Curé, and we will depart together." Said Lady Mary Wortley Montague, sitting up in bed, "It has all been very interesting." Voltaire, thrusting a priest from him, cried, "Away! Let me die in peace!" Daniel Defoe said, "I do not know which is more difficult in a Christian life, to live well, or die well."

Only the Romanticists put imagination into 19th Century dying. The period was embalmed in concrete; its people worked harder than any people had ever worked, and seemed only able to crush more and more joy out of life while adding more and more horror to death. Between the Industrial Revolution and Charles Darwin all Mrs. David Garrick could say to her maidservant, when the girl brought some tea to her dying, ninety-eight-year-old mistress, was, "Put it down, you hussy! Don't you think I can help myself?" And Bob Ingersoll could only say, "Now I feel better."

There had to be a change from that, of course, and it came with the 20th Century. Miss Moore calls it a humanistic note, and that is as good a term as any. She quotes the modern poets, who are discovering (?) that the intellect, if followed beyond the ego, leads to the soul. She mentions the scientists who are applying laboratory technique to extra-sensory perception, and to the deathbed itself. Dying, she says, has a future, and there can be no doubt of that. Science is determined to explore life until life swallows it up, and who knows how far it may go into death before that happens?

Already, according to Miss Moore, there is a new and spiritual style to dying. She ignores John Barrymore, of course, and all the other rebels. But even Barrymore's final jest somehow cannot equal George II's sincere reply to the dying Queen Caroline when she suggested that he

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might succor himself from her loss by getting married again. "No," he sobbed, "I will take mistresses." "Well, my God," said Caroline, "there's no harm in that."

Miss Moore is a skillful, intelligent writer, concerned alike with the two primary ingredients of her craft, style and thought. She has compiled an excellent and fascinating anthology of dying, but she has also put down a commentary on the spiritual, material, and mental progress of man which will madden the pedants, confound fools, and delight the imaginative. God bless her, and may all who read her book take for their model of dying Sir Thomas More, who had but to speak a dishonest word to save his life. He would not, and as he set out for the Tower, leaving, behind him family, honor, wealth and fame, he said, "Thank God the field is won." That is the way to die.

Athens Under the Yoke

SHADOW OVER ATHENS. By Phokion Demetriades. New York: Rinehart & Co., Inc. 1946. 155 *pp.* $3.

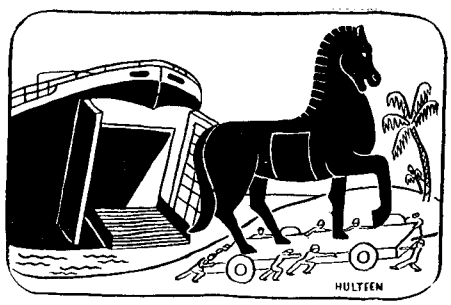
Reviewed by WILLIAM S. LYNCH

CAMERA men poked their lenses everywhere during the war. They brought us proof positive of the maniacal behavior of those whom we were proud to call our enemy. Yet despite their omnipresence and despite the fine tradition of the art the photographer has inherited from the Bradys of the past, only a few succeeded in awakening the emotional and intellectual response aroused by the talented wielding of brush and pen. Now the efforts of workers in the older art forms are coming to our attention. When they are sketches and paintings by capable men and women who suffered under the Hun they promise to be footnotes to history more illuminating than the text itself. This bound portfolio of seventy-seven drawings of Athens at the mercy of the Germans and the Italians is an excellent example of how revealing graphic observation can be.

These drawings were prepared and preserved by Phokion Demetriades, president of the Greek Association of Cartoonists, and political cartoonist since 1922 on *Vina*, the leading democratic newspaper in Greece. The fact that he drew these pictures suggests a tale of heroism when it is recalled that he had been arrested by the Gestapo for his anti-Hitler posters and was under constant surveillance. The illustrations of the greatness of the modern Athenians under a conqueror as brutal as any their ancient counterparts had known are modest and restrained, singularly devoid of the bombast which some of our artists on assignment brought back from relatively gentler battlefields. To anyone looking for the mordancy and vigor of Goya, the drawings in "Shadow over Athens" will at first glance seem tame and over-restrained. But look at them again and you will find a hatred as corrosive as that of Goya, and in addition a burning delight in retaliation by good men.

No one needs to be told by now that the occupation of Greece was carried out in an incredibly evil fashion. From his "apartment in Athens" Demetriades saw the whole thing—from the retreat of the British to their return. He heard, too, the sounds of machine guns mowing down hostages, of hobnail boots marching arrogantly across the pavements, and, most poignant of all, the cry of hungry children. The drawing whose caption is the title of the book is accompanied by the bit of text which reads, "Frequently during the night small children could be heard crying in the streets, 'I'm hungry.'" That simple statement, one of the most tragic that could be made, underlines a picture of a youngster in the shadows tottering alone through the streets. Its sentiment is the final curse on war.

In his brief preface Mr. Demetriades concludes, "In some small measure these pictures preserve a record of how the Germans treated our people. And they preserve, too, a record of our answering defiance and of the Greek love of freedom which even in the darkest days is never lost." He has judged his pictures well. Anyone who scrutinizes these illustrations of one of the war's most sombre chapters will admire the skill of the artist; more than that, they will be grateful to a people who have inherited a tradition which is one of the most meaningful to civilized persons and who are proved here to be worthy of it.



Real Inside Stuff

DIARY OF A KRIEGIE. By Edward W. Beattie, Jr. New York: Thomas Crowell Co. 1946. 312 *pp.* $3.

Reviewed by HENRY B. KRANZ

THE history of the war and of the dark days in which we live has been faithfully and often brilliantly reported by our foreign correspondents. They "were there," in every corner of the globe, and they were never silent. They described death, corruption, and terror, the happiness in the eyes of liberated people, and the fear in the children's hearts in air-raid shelters. And when Edward W. Beattie, one of U.P.'s ace correspondents, who had reported the major incidents of the war from the "China Incident" to the battle of France, was taken prisoner by the Germans in September 1944, he became the first American correspondent to report life in a Nazi POW camp.

He had approached a town thinking it was American-held, only to find to his regret that it was better for war correspondents to follow their armies than to announce them to the enemy. (Unless they want to write a book of their experiences.) Mr. Beattie soon found himself a Kriegie —slang for "Kriegsgefangener" (Prisoner of War). He kept a diary. And after his liberation by the Russians, eight months later, he included important conversations and other compromising data in it. "Diary of a Kriegie" makes very interesting reading now because it contains a great deal of valuable information about the moral and military disintegration within the Third Reich before the Nazi collapse. And it has suspense, action, and humor. Mr. Beattie, however, rarely searches deeper than most reporters who are mainly interested in the who, what, where, and when of a story. (But this will perhaps be regretted only by former POW's such as this writer.) Many of his stories are quite illuminating. For instance, his report on how he was taken to Berlin and questioned by three Propaganda Ministry officials whom he had known five years before. These men as well as many of his guards frankly discussed with him Germany's serious situation. But they said they would fight on because surrender meant a "Bolshevik chaos." (Today this is still the popular "line" in Germany.)

The author's command of German and intimate knowledge of the Nazi system helped him to overcome a great many obstacles during his prison days.

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Strictly Personal

BIOGRAPHY NOW AND TOMORROW

AFTER wars come revulsions in literary taste. Prettiness is at a discount. Beauty is found in the cool dry draught of realities, rather than in the syrups of evasion and escape. Specifically, before World War I, American readers wallowed in sweetishness. Alice Payne Hackett, in her "Fifty Years of Best Sellers," records that no non-fiction title appears on any best-seller list for the years 1895-1911 inclusive. The top fiction choices, moreover, included such emetics as "The Seats of the Mighty," by Gilbert Parker, and "Lady Rose's Daughter," by Mrs. Humphrey Ward.

The realistic trend was already in full swing before 1914. Dreiser, Arnold Bennett, Galsworthy, Wells, Shaw, Frank Norris were luminaries; but not until after the War of 1914-1918 did the public seize upon non-fiction as a major part of its reading fare. The most conspicuous feature of the new trend was the acclaim accorded to biography. Biography, hitherto never placing in the publishing race, became a winner again and again. To what extent biography may be revived and vital today is the focus of this article.

The place of biography in belles lettres is an indispensable phase of the subject, but can only be alluded to here. What part biography has in literature, what in history, what are its obligations in each direction, how these requirements have been met by biographers, all are pertinent considerations ultimately. Strachey, for example, is no historian; and most, not all, biographies by professional historians lack literary form. Within the space of this article I can deal only with those books which succeeded in the numerical-readership sense, and predict what may happen again.

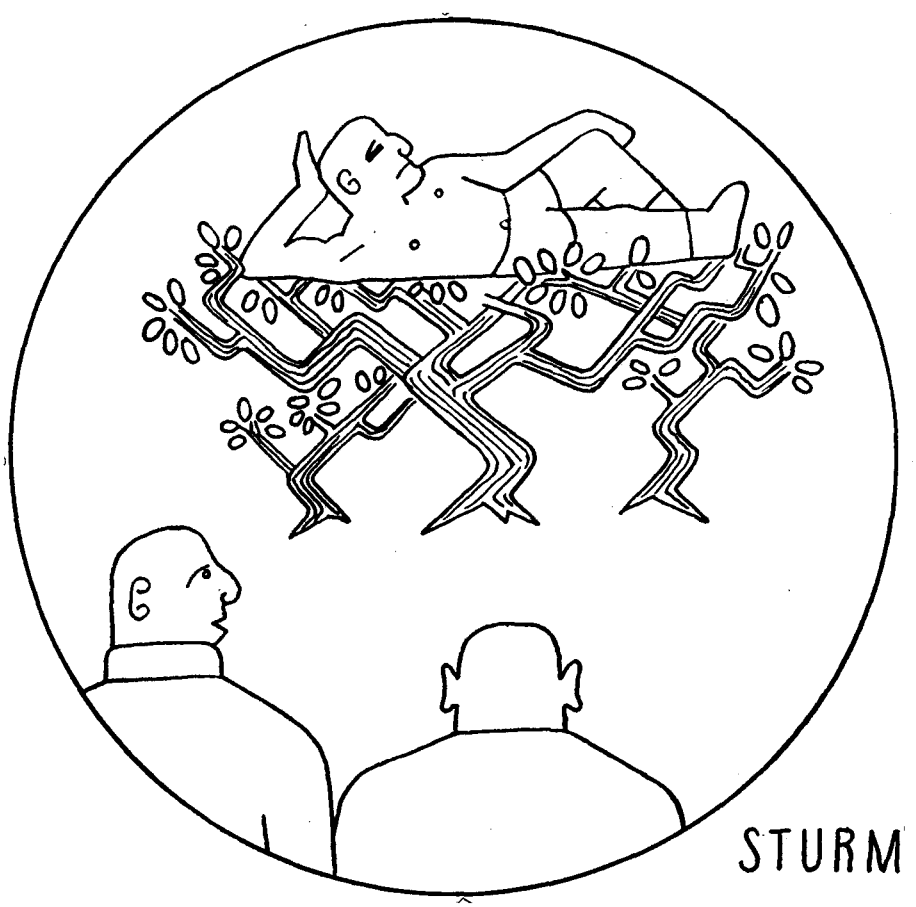
Following World War I, Strachey, Werner, Maurois, Ludwig, Sandburg, Guedalla, Bowers, Barton, and lesser names pushed fiction writers aside and became the autograph signers of their day. Will Durant belongs in the list, as his "The Story of Philosophy," a two-year best-seller, was essentially a collection of biographies of philosophers.

By the end of the 1920's these notables had had their brief moment as super-celebrities, and the top honors in 1931-40, measured by annual best-sellers, included only four biographies—Zweig ("Marie Antoinette"), Nijinska ("Nijinsky"), Hackett ("Francis the First"), and Curie ("Madame Curie"). In either period I do not include autobiographies, such as the memoirs of military folk which may have a news-popularity value wholly apart from literary considerations.

That biography has again fallen into the doldrums seems evident by contemplation of the names mentioned above. Since when have we had a biography as much on the public tongue as "Ariel," or even a dozen others, including "Elizabeth and Essex?" That alone might not be surprising, the passing of a vogue as such; but in recent years there has been virtually no first-class biography (regardless of best-seller figures) equivalent to the work of such men as Nevins, Brooks, Van Doren, Freeman, Pringle, James. Have the book publishers, the authors, the public, or all three turned away from this literary form?

The late Horace Liveright gave me a partial answer to the question. "Generally speaking," he said, "the public will read biography about famous names only. For every generation or so there is an audience for a new biography on Napoleon, Jefferson, Lincoln, Franklin, Marie Antoinette, Lee, or what have you. But it must be someone they already know about. The best biography in the world about some relatively minor figure will have no chance." He qualified his statement in only two respects. The life of a bizarre character such as Barnum always has wide interest. Similarly, Cinderella, or personal advancement, stories have a continuing appeal. He cited the Samuel Smiles "Self Help" series as a classic example.

Liveright's general pessimism on the subject was echoed recently by the president of one of America's largest publishing houses. "We've not had one biography in the past twelve years which has sold over 10,000 copies. Two on our list in this period have won Pulitzer prizes, yet the award meant hardly more than 1,000 additional sales in each case. It's strange, because before the war and before the depression a top-flight biography on our list would run to 50,000 copies and upwards." That comment said, in other words, that for a dozen years biography had not been near the top of the publisher's list.



"The Champ is getting soft resting on his laurels all the time."

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Biography is not dead for having passed from the best-seller lists. That circumstance alone might mean that it has been translated to inner recesses of the fine arts, burning with Pater's pure gem-like flame. On the contrary, it has merely and dubiously moved from book publishing to the magazines and the movies. That, I believe, is a trend which publishers might ponder thoughtfully. *The New Yorker, Life,* and *The Saturday Evening Post* have set a general style in which "profiles" and "portraits" have become a feature of most magazines. Jack Alexander, Alva Johnston, St. Clair McKelway, Noel F. Busch are the Moneypennys and Boswells of the moment. True, the periodicals customarily deal only with living characters, and a public which can find Churchill served up complete in two installments may have little time or patience for long treatments of past heroes. *Fortune,* however, is one magazine which has gone in for quickies of the dead. The brief literary portrait of notables alive or deceased is modern, but not exclusively so. Some of the best of the genre were written by that extraordinarily popular and gifted biographer, Lord Macaulay, the unrivalled digester of his era.

The motion pictures, too, have staked out their claims on the public interest in biography, with varying success. Curiously enough, "Abe Lincoln in Illinois" was a box office failure; but "Wilson" was a notable success. "The Story of Louis Pasteur," "The Life of Emile Zola," "Rembrandt," and the Edison picture all paid dividends.

Commercial complications, however, will probably continue to handicap the place of biography in the cinema art. Producers like to take advantage of the principle that history is in the public domain. Francis Hackett, it will be recalled, wrote a brocaded, bejewelled, best-seller life of Henry the VIIIth. His scholarship was superior. His details were not dreamed up but dug up—from the British Museum, from Somerset House. Hence certain Hollywood negotiators claimed he had contributed nothing original and therefore nothing salable. It was all extant, all available for anyone bright enough to know about it, find it and put it together.

AS this area of doubt exists in the public domain, literary agents tend to be dubious about biography as a motion picture property, and authors are tempted toward more lucrative fields. Further, producers and directors may dislike the compulsions of the historical record. Sometimes, however, the facts are a challenge and a triumph, as in the careful work in the production of "Wilson." The movies may be looked to from time to time to produce notable biographical films.

"Your change, sir!"

In radio, biography is embryonic. Its scope and future in this field are limitless. Here again there is insufficient space to discuss the present state and its possibilities. At the moment, moreover, I am writing of biography as books. Where do we go from here?

In the Apocrypha (Ecclesiasticus xliv, 1) is the phrase: "Let us now praise famous men and our fathers that begat us. The Lord has wrought great glory by them through his great power from the beginning." The term "praise" means to celebrate rather than to whitewash. The thought underlies the whole biographical tradition, not only from Beowulf, but in all tongues.

A central core of primitive literature was the recounting of tales of the traditional heroes. Some races, notably the Greeks and the Hebrews, made no attempt to turn their heroes into white-robed saints. Consider David, the noble and poetic Jewish leader whose scandalous backslidings are also recorded with stark objectivity.

Whether the mood of the era may be to debunk or to glorify, there is always in times of crisis an impulse to turn to individual guidance. In war, this may lead to the clamor for supermen. In reaction from war it is likely to emphasize the importance of the individual in himself and in choosing his own destiny. In that area biography has something to offer.

Today, both civilian and returned soldier face an undefined, undecided world. Everything in the future is in unknown terms; but the history of mankind is man, and it is this writer's guess that the true stories of men, as in the 1920's, will have a leading part in the literature of the next decade.

I predict, also, that the biographies of 1946-56 will be of two general types. The first type will be the full-length biography, like Sandburg's "Lincoln," or Freeman's "Lee," or Bowers's Jefferson trilogy—the intensive long-range study of some one man who has been a major influence in America's history. The public is willing to read by the fireside for long stretches at a time of a few of its traditional heroes, of whom perhaps Ford is the only one of modern times. The return of the full-bodied, long biography to the popular lists seems probable upon occasion, when there is the combination of a famous subject, presented by a spacious, penetrating mind which also has the gift for narrative.

Of the rest, of biography in general, I predict that it will revive briskly, in books of from thirty to sixty thousand words. Daniel Webster, for example, might command a two hundred page revival, but anything more would sink him. The book form will continue to have more authority and permanence than the magazine, the motion picture, or the radio, but it cannot escape the influence of their competition.

J. C. LONG.

J. C. Long is the author of biographies of William Jennings Bryan, Lord Jeffery Amherst, and William Pitt.

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FOR MURDERERS ONLY

ESCAPE after any period of tension is as natural as it is necessary. There are times when escapist literature, movies, sports, and other forms of entertainment can be a valuable mass antidote to mass depletion.

But escape needs no champions these days; no feats of persuasion are necessary to convince the American people of its advantages—if we are to judge by the large percentage of the national income given over to escapist products and activities. What concerns us here is not escape but the area beyond escape; not relief but abdication; not the normal manifestations but the abnormal stupidities; not the conditioned reflexes but the unconditioned crassness.

There is little point in attempting to deodorize what is happening in America today by calling it escape. It is difficult to find any name for it, but the overriding characteristic is a supreme insensitivity to the real world, compounded by self-glorification, self-gratification, and a luxuriant obliviousness to past, present, and future. There are no limits save those of time, for it is the pleasure of the short-range.

If this seems too severe, how can we explain the hideous imperviousness to the starvation of millions this past winter? Pardon the misstatement. What has happened was not starvation but murder. We, the people of America, the inheritors of a tradition of liberality and morality, are responsible for the murder of upwards of twenty million human beings during the last few months.

We had it in our power to save those human beings but we let them die. We had all the information we needed last October about the facts of imminent death; we knew then what was needed and where; we knew not only about the danger but the desperation. Yet as late as last month we were still engaged in the bizarre game of continued fact-finding. We had helped to set up a United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration, supplying it with grains of flour when sacks were needed, and ignoring the reports of its director, who implored us to avert an immediate catastrophe. And then, when it was all but too late, we improvised a fact-finding expedition which turned in the same facts that were available in much more detailed and comprehensive form almost a half year earlier.

Now that we are drenched with facts, now that we can hardly see the starving for the statistics, what are we doing? Have we taken the measures necessary to halt the continued murder — measures easily within our means? Have we committed ourselves to an *adequate* national policy of sharing? Have we limited by law our own food consumption? Or are we more concerned about the importance of toadying to voters before the fall elections? And if the politicians have done the American people an injustice by anticipating an imaginary resentment over the issue of food rationing, why haven't the American people made it clear to their politicians that the real resentment will be directed against those who are holding back in the fulfillment of the American responsibility?

It would be a mistake to believe that the officeholders are to blame. In a democracy, the individual enjoys not only the ultimate power but carries the ultimate responsibility. Unpleasant as it is to have to answer for the avoidable deaths of countless millions in Europe, India, and China, each individual American today must be assessed with his full portion of the blame. Nor is this responsibility a negative one—something to be assumed because of political default. It is a direct obligation, made no less dramatic because of the grotesque spree which has almost become a national preoccupation. It is not only that most Americans eat more in one day than most Europeans eat in one week; nor that we are spending more during a day on horse races than on food shipments for abroad for an entire month; nor that our nylon lines form an awkward contrast with the lines of thousands of Chinese waiting for the privilege to lie down in wooden coffins to die. The real crime lies not in the disparity but in the impassiveness, in the imperturbability, in the incuriosity, in the indecision, in the insufficiency of effort and conscience when compared to the need.

The issue and the graves are still open. Every week the toll mounts, as does the guilt of the murderers. Only an immediate and complete mobilization of America's industrial and agricultural resources, a mobilization for mercy comparable in size and intensity with the mobilization for war, can begin to cope with the problem. The effort will not be easy or the cost cheap; but it can never be so high as the cost of a continued anesthesia of responsibility. N. C.

Heard on an Empty Wind

By Catharine Turner

THIS is your day, irrepressible child,
ripping the wings off creatures in your garden spot,
poking exploratory fingers into private places,
turning the gas jets wide, cocking wide the gun.
This is your day.

Night will come soon, indefatigable child.
Night is not pleasant when there is no breath,
when there is no warm enveloping mother-self.
Cold stars come in the house that has no roof.
Night will come soon.

It did no good at all, credulous child,
to place the stop signs on the cluttered road,
scrawl skull and bones, hang scarecrows on the post,
lock all the doors and throw the key away.
It did no good.

It is too late to turn, unhappy child.
This road is one way. In your groping hand
you had the answer. Bind your eyes,
put cotton in your ears, say your last prayer.
It is too late.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The Lunar Rainbow

SIR: Apropos Starr Nelson's "The White Rainbow," one hesitates after that setting to say, "I have seen one." The experience I've never lightly shared—it belonged to a world tales of which entrance one's hearers.

Home, the Half Moon Ranch, a place we homesteaded in the 20s, lay just below the Grand Teton Peak in Jackson Hole, Wyoming. That life, plus four children, plus dude ranching, was full of ups and downs. If one loved the life, one grew aware of new values—one's sense of reality and unreality changed.

We drove one night at the end of an arduous season. The road wound across the sage flats. On one side a moon high in the sky. On the other, a light rainfall far across the flats by the mountains. Space and silence. By magic or miracle—sprang a luminous misty arch against the mountain range. For how long? I don't know.

K. CLEMENS BACKUS.

Berkeley, Calif.

SIR: In your issue of April 6 you print a note below the poem by Starr Nelson which states that the lunar rainbow is extremely rare.

This brought to my mind a fine description of one as seen in the outer Hebrides Islands, where it occurs nearly every rainy night.

The book containing this account is "Father Alan's Island," by Amy Murray, published in 1920 by Harcourt, a book, by the way, which, like her "November Hereabout," which Julie Sloane praised in your magazine, is full of nutty values as rare as moonbows in places other than Eriskay.

MARY MOWBRAY-CLARKE.

Pomona, New York.

A FitzGerald Memorial

SIR: Several years ago I was asked by Mrs. Charles Ganz of Brownbays, Pear Tree Lane, Bexhill, Sussex, England, on behalf of English subscribers to a plaque in memory of Edward FitzGerald, to provide an opportunity for American admirers of the poet to have a share in the memorial. Several subscriptions from this side of the Atlantic were received in due course and forwarded to England. Mr. Ganz now informs me that the plaque designed by Sir Frank Brangwyn, R.A., was completed before the war and that the plaque has now been erected in three appropriate places—in the School of Oriental and African Studies of the University of London, in King's Parade, Cambridge, and at FitzGerald's birthplace, Bredfield House in Sussex.

JEROME D. GREENE.

Boston, Mass.

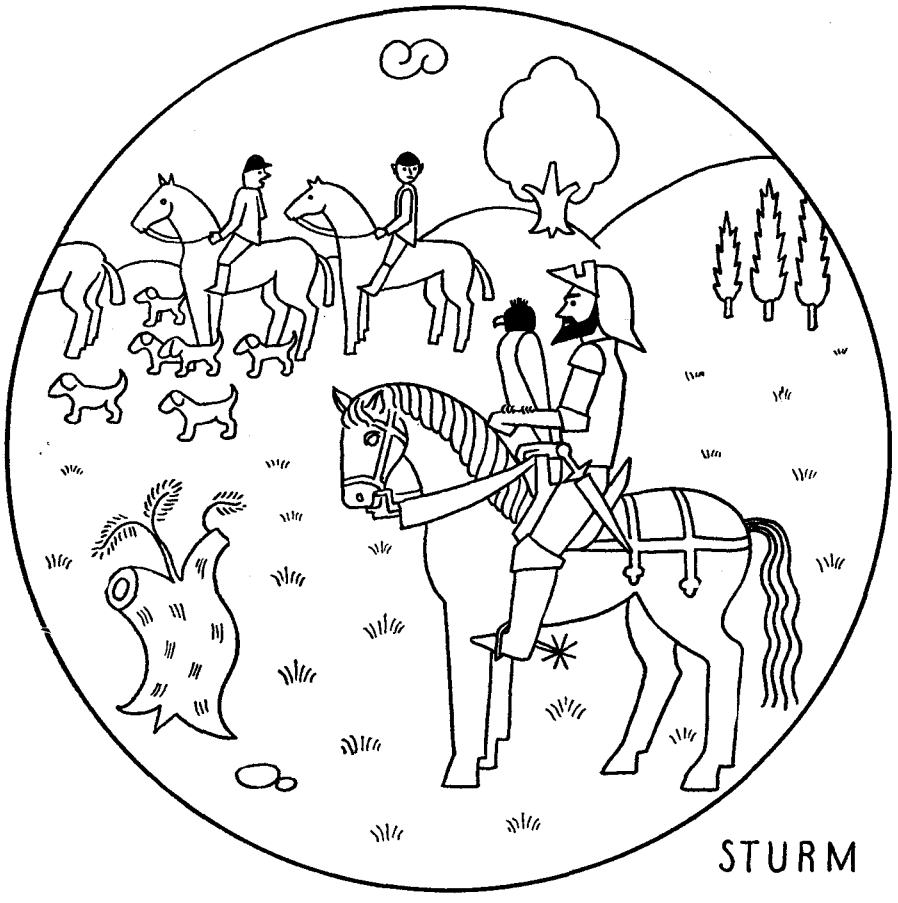
In Memory of Lyle Saxon

SIR: Inasmuch as many of the friends of Lyle Saxon are grieved at his death on April 9, and do not know the circumstances under which he passed away, this is to let them know that he died of pneumonia, in New Orleans, following an operation on March 29. He was buried in Baton Rouge on Thursday, April 11. His aunt, Miss Maude Chambers of this city, is his nearest living relative.

The Louisiana Library Commission is beginning a special Saxon Collection—letters, manuscripts, pictures, etc. We will be glad to accept any reminiscences, tributes, or Saxon stories from the friends of one of the best-known and best-loved writers of Louisiana.

ESSAE MARTHA CULVER.

Louisiana Library Commission,
Baton Rouge, La.



"Who is that guy and what does he want?"

Words

SIR: Thoughts after reading a new text book on dynamic psychiatry:

Up from scatophyllic mud,
Circumanbient milieu,
Wretched semeiotic dud,
Oh, my friend, can this be you?
Nothing but a poor Frustracean,
Crawling on the earth's crustation!

CARL BINGER.

New York, N. Y.

Arabism and Zionism

SIR: While Mr. Charles Rolo is honest enough to acknowledge the literary merits of Miss Freya Stark's "The Arab Island" (*SRL*, March 30), yet, to a greater degree, he succumbs to those pitfalls of which he so freely accuses her.

Miss Stark is undoubtedly an imperialist and a friend of the Arabs. But she is not a friend of the Arabs because she is an imperialist, although she may well believe—and may well be mistaken—that friendship with the Arabs is necessary for successful British imperialism in the Middle East. If one may presume what her political opinions are in this respect, one may say that she believes Arab will to independence irresistible, and instead of Britain combating it and standing to lose everything and gain Arab hatred, she is for the encouragement of Arab self-determination and the gaining, thereby, of Arab good-will.

Although this theory may not be convincing to everybody, it is nevertheless quite defensible, especially if one reflects upon the short-sighted policy of France, who lost everything in the Middle East by being blindly opposed to Arab claims.

As matters stand, however, the Arabs are determined to achieve self-determination, so long denied them, whether the British are agreeable thereto or not; and whatever attitude they take will certainly not deflect them from their unswerving purpose.

In addition to her political views, all that Miss Stark attempted in her book to do, then, was to speak in a friendly manner of those good sides of the Arab character which, unfortunately, for too long remained obscured by Zionist propaganda, interested, as it was, to further the prospects of its own designs of domination over Palestine. It may well be at the

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same time that Miss Stark wished to slightly right the balance in this connection, although neither she nor anyone else can, for a long time to come, hope to reverse the one-sided picture assiduously and powerfully presented by the Zionists for the last quarter century.

That is why Mr. Charles Rolo should not have taken her to task for attempting to do what she did and it is most regrettable that not only does he take exception to her acknowledging right where right is due but, actually, goes out of his way to mention with undue emphasis, and sometimes complete misrepresentation, incidents in the Arab Middle Eastern set-up of little consequence.

Thus his allegation that "the Mufti's entourage in Palestine built up a first-class spy ring for the Nazis" is absolutely without foundation. Why, if that is the case, has not the local British Government, who should be careful to safeguard its safety in the most deadly war it ever went through, why did it not track down and capture a single one of these so-called spies? Was it incompetence on its part, and if so, how is it that Mr. Rolo knew about it while the British Government did not? I was in Palestine during the whole period of the war and never had the slightest inkling about it.

Again, Mr. Rolo says that "Egypt welshed on its treaty obligations to declare war when invaded." The truth of the matter is that there was *no* clause in the Anglo-Egyptian treaty enjoining Egypt to declare war on the side of Britain. In point of fact, Egypt has not only fulfilled her treaty obligations with Britain in the letter and the spirit, but has voluntarily exceeded what was required of her, and to this fact many a British statesman has already paid public tribute.

Yes, the Arabs were "chivalrous" not to engage in sabotage against the British during the war. For during the last quarter century they have been continuously bullied by them in the whole of the Middle East and in Palestine sometimes machine-gunned, hanged, their houses dynamited, and always betrayed, humiliated, and their future endangered by Zionism for which, in the eyes of the Arabs, they remain the only culprits.

Undoubtedly, as Mr. Rolo says, the Arabs have "their fair share of faults" —but who has not? And Miss Stark, by dwelling on Arab qualities has, in my opinion, made a contribution without which the picture would not be complete.

ANWAR NASHASHIBI.
The Arab Office,
Washington, D. C.

SIR: I think it relevant in answering Mr. Nashashibi to point out that I have before me a letter from a Zionist group strongly criticizing an article of mine which stresses the strength of Arab opposition to Zionism and questions some of the basic premises of the Zionist case. My sin, in the eyes of *both* the Arabs and the Zionists, is that I firmly refuse to believe, on the basis of first-hand knowledge, that either side has a monopoly of wisdom and virtue.

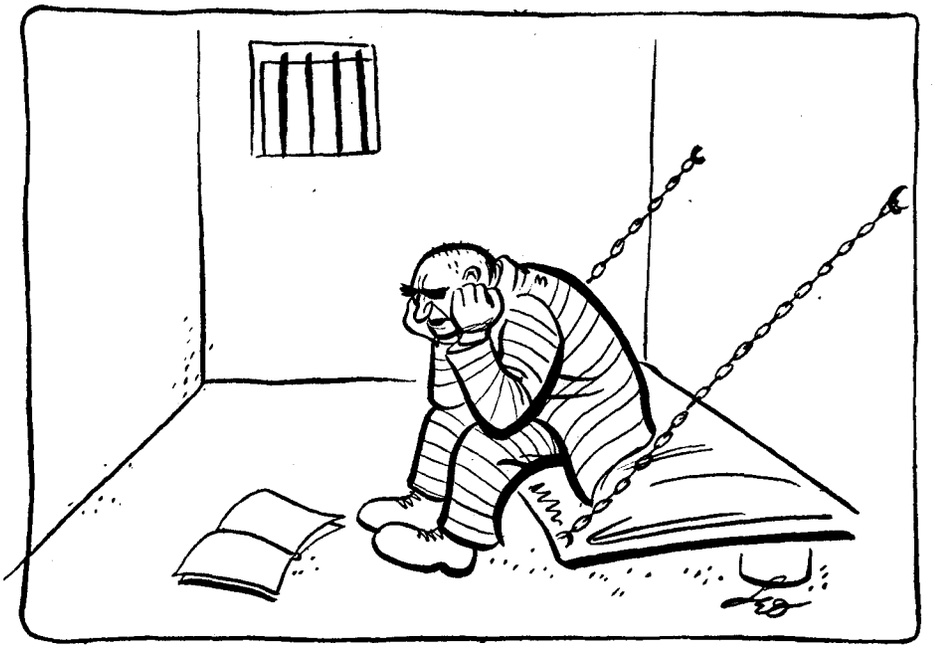
Mr. Nashashibi petulantly ignores my critical reference to Zionist propaganda and favorable reference to "the great many fine and lovable qualities" of the Arabs, and says, in effect, "The beastly fellow won't admit we're perfect." (Read Dale Carnegie, Mr. N., and don't be so eager to antagonize neutrals.)

Regarding questions of fact: He deplores my emphasis on "incidents of little consequence." The rebellion in Iraq? Hardly inconsequential. The surrounding of King Farouk's Palace by British tanks to force acceptance of a coöperative premier? The Egyptians consider it an event of staggering importance. Mr. Nashashibi has, in addition, completely misunderstood the drift of my argument. My quarrel with Miss Stark is that she depicts the Arabs as the great and good friends of the British Empire. I said that was nonsense. Mr. Nashashibi says as much himself in his letter! I said Egypt welshed on its treaty obligations to declare war when invaded, and I still mean it. Article 7 of the Anglo-Egyptian Treaty of Alliance binds Egypt, in the event of war, to come to Britain's aid "in the capacity of an ally . . . with all the facilities and assistance in his (the King's) power." The obligation to defend Egyptian soil against the Italians and later the Germans—which Egypt did not do—is the *minimum* interpretation implicit in those words. And why didn't the British government track down Axis sympathizers in the Mufti's entourage? Well, it did—and deported them to nasty places in Africa.

The rest of the letter isn't worth bothering with, but the fact that it was written raises a point which may be of some interest to your readers. Mr. Nashashibi is an official Arab propagandist who is paid to scan the papers and magazines for any statement not wholeheartedly pro-Arab, and to improve the occasion by getting as much free publicity as he can for his cause. The Zionist groups are doing exactly the same thing. My feeling is that this type of letter—rattled off to a more or less set formula—should end up in the waste paper basket whether it comes from Arab or Zionist. We know, only too well, the gist of the Arab argument and of the Zionist argument. If official spokesmen want to force a set of battered cliches down your throat, why don't you make them buy paid space in your advertising columns? It is worth noting that the United States Office of War Information abroad and the British Information Services here only write to editors when a *recorded fact* is misstated or a speech misquoted. Several editors I know have been so bored, browbeaten, and bullied with this dreary tripe that they (understandably) can't face the kickback they'd get on any reasonably objective article: they find it less harrowing to print a pro-Zionist article balanced by a pro-Arab article, which simply leaves the reader to decide on the basis of two conflicting pieces of windy hokum.

It's a hard task to try to write honestly and dispassionately about the tangled problems of the Middle East, and I have a hunch that other writers who have wrestled with this subject are also getting heartily sick of this two-sided persecution. Let us by all means be corrected on errors of fact, but why in heaven's name should we be treated, each time we say something in print, to the same tedious lecture on Zionism or the Arab case, which we'd listened to a hundred times over before writing a line?

CHARLES ROLO.
New York City.



"Nothin' to read—nothin' but this escapist stuff!"

Ezra Pound at Play

SIR: As an addendum to Julian Huxley's entertaining "Berlin 11 6191 Does Not Answer" (*SRL* April 13), I am sure that some kind of a moral could be drawn from Ezra Pound's one and only recreation: "The public taste."

JAMES TAYLOR DUNN.
Olean, N. Y.

Basic Poetry

SIR: After reading David Hudson's "Basic English Versus Poetry" (*SRL* March 23) it was impossible to resist the temptation to parody Miss Stein: "A word is a word is a word."

ANNE SWEARINGEN.
Washington, D. C.

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TRADE Winds

AT ONE OF the first performances of the new musical comedy sensation, "Annie Get Your Gun," Dick Rodgers, the producer, stood in the lobby during the intermission with Irving Berlin, composer of the hit-studded score. Berlin moved away, and a stout lady standing nearby obviously recognized him. She nudged her husband, and Dick heard her say wonderingly, "Sam, to look at him, who would think?" . . . One of the clowns in the Ringling circus boasted to John North that his brother had worked out a sensational act. "Brother Al got himself shot out of a cannon," he explained. "How did he like it?" asked North. "That's hard to say," admitted the clown. "We never found him." . . . Charles Lee is telling about the bee who got a bumble from heaven. . . . An eagle-eyed publisher discovered this item buried unobtrusively in the financial page of the *New York Sun:* "American News Company: Michael A. Morrissey and Harold E. Williams acquired, respectively, 1546 and 1000 shares of the new common, held, respectively, 3092 and 2000." The current quotation is hovering around $56 a share. The publisher did some quick calculating, and called Tycoon Williams on the phone. "I see now what came of all those extra discounts you wangled out of me," he said bitterly. "Shucks," replied the Tycoon, "we didn't make that out of books. It was the ham sandwiches at the Union News stands." . . .

MORE INCREDIBLE even than the weird pictures he shows at his Rialto Theatre are the stories Arthur Mayer tells of his adventures abroad.

When he was in China he claims to have traveled with a Red Cross hospital unit carrying medical supplies deep into the mountain country which the Japs had been unable to conquer. The expedition consisted of a half-dozen trucks and a few jeeps. One day, while he and the field director were regaling themselves with a cup of tea at a small inn, their Chinese drivers called out in consternation. Bandits had seized and were sacking the vans of the caravan. The field director, who spoke Chinese fluently, approached the two-gun desperado who appeared to be the leader of the bandits, and asked for the pleasure of the ruffian's company over some light liquid refreshments.

While they tested the local product he told how supply-laden planes were being flown over the Hump, at a heavy cost in American lives, to save Chinese lives. After a few persuasive rounds of rice wine and Red Cross eloquence, the kindly cutthroat strode to the window and bellowed to his henchmen to stop unloading the trucks. He returned and listened while the field director outlined plans for hostels to serve the starving and free clinics to relieve the diseased. At length the robber's resistance was entirely undermined and he yelled to his gangsters to reload the seized supplies. "Only let me have some gasoline," he pleaded. "Preserve my prestige. I have a beautiful stolen jeep but to continue my career as a bandit chief I must be able to drive it." "But if we give you gasoline," the field director explained, "the authorities will never forgive us and let us have any more." The gunman strode sulkily away and proceeded to confer ominously with his companions in crime. In the meantime, Mayer urged his men to crank up the trucks and get rolling as fast as possible. But before they could get started, the ruffian rushed towards them waving a pistol in one hand and a roll of Chinese bills in the other. "Here's fifty thousand dollars" (approximately $50 in American money). "I made the boys chip in," he said, "to help your work. Now get going and be careful to keep to the valley road. The hills are lousy with bandits." . . .

DELICACIES COMING UP: Another sure-fire best-seller called "Britannia Mews" by Margery Sharp, author of "The Nutmeg Tree" and "Cluny Brown." . . . "The Bathtub Reader," a different kind of anthology compiled by Amy Vanderbilt. "Of course it will float," said Amy in reply to a query. "It's 99.44% pure." . . . "A Treasury of Laughter," a wonderful compilation by that old master, Louis Untermeyer. . . . A long-needed one-volume condensation of Vasari's "Lives of the Artists" by Betty Burroughs. . . . Vera Caspary's "Stranger Than Truth," destined to top her "Laura" and "Bedelia." . . . "Past All Dishonor," the story of a Confederate spy in Virginia City at the height of its boom period, by James M. Cain, Hollywood's current white-haired boy. . . . "A World to Win," latest addition to the amazingly popular Lanny Budd series, by Upton Sinclair. . . . Plays: "Dream Girl" (Coward McCann); "Born Yesterday" (Viking); "The Iceman Cometh" (Random House). . . . Suddenly the *avant garde* is talking of nothing else but two young French writers named Jean Paul Sartre and Albert Camus. Blanche Knopf, that clever lady, sewed up American rights to both of them two years ago. . . . Ann Bridge's "Singing Waters" is the July selection of the Literary Guild, which insures a modest advance printing of about a million copies. . . . Columbia University Press is touting heavily a fall entry by George Lawton, entitled "Aging Successfully." As of today, Trade Winds is ordering two copies, not one! . . .

IN RUSSELL MALONEY'S delectable potpourri, "It's Still Maloney" (the last story alone, "Inflexible Logic," is worth the price of admission), he analyzes the quirk that permits laymen who would never dream of showing vulgar curiosity over the earnings of a banker or butcher asking a writer blandly, "How much did you get for that last piece in *The New Yorker*?" or "How much will you make out of your book?" Maloney says that Alva Johnston worked out an answer that for some reason is an infallible stopper: "I get twenty-six dollars a column, but I have to pay my own expenses." . . . One of the best of Maloney's back-stage reminiscences of *New Yorker* days concerns the time a regular poetry contributor won the Pulitzer Prize. An editor wrote him a warm letter of congratulation, and tacked on a P.S.

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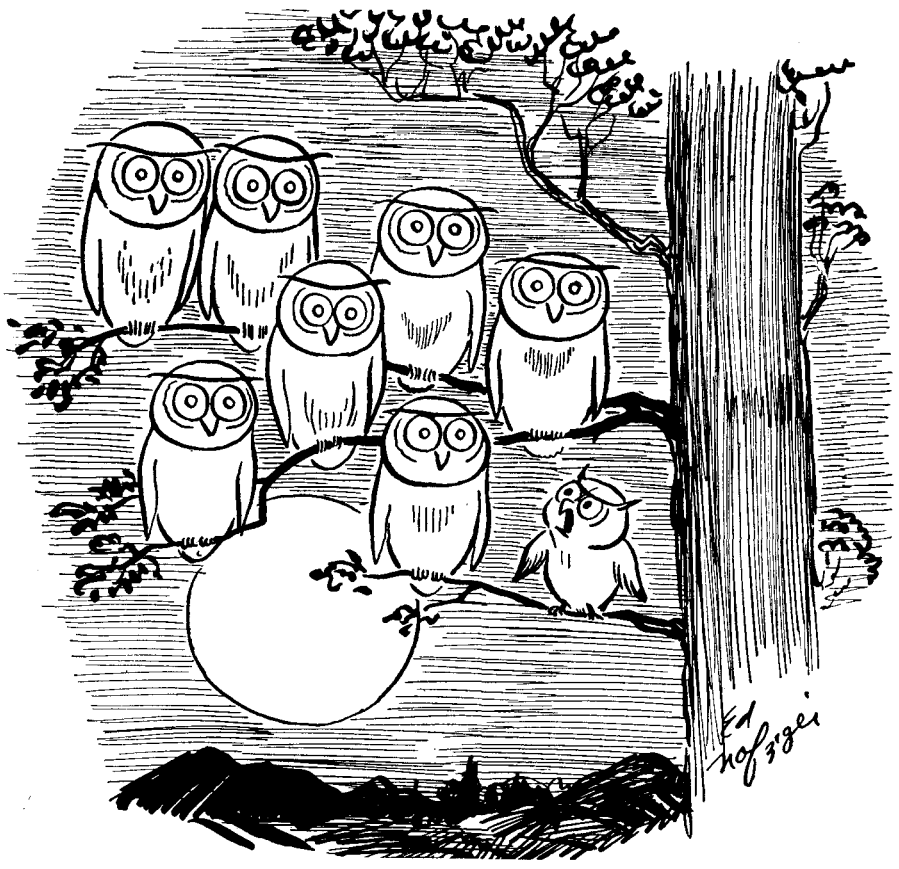

"For heaven's sake, somebody blink!"

that read, "We are returning herewith your last batch of poems, because none of them seems quite right for our present needs." . . .

I THINK YOU will like Gates Hubbard's ode to the cocktail, written for his Truffles and Trifles column in *Gourmet Magazine,* and reprinted here by permission:

Old-fashioneds have been known to make
Grim spinsters do the patty-cake.
Mild folk have found the Whiskey Sour
Imparts a lovely Sense of Power.
Manhattans easily erase
That frightened-hare look from a face.
Shy ladies learn how to meander
On just a single Alexander,
And often, after two Bacardis,
Old gents turn into Andy Hardys,
While timid souls are wont to do
Trapeze acts on a Bronx or two.
Oh, what a blessing for the masses
That courage lurks in cocktail glasses;
Why, jush on shix Martinis we
Can lick any guy in the housh, yesh, shir, brother,
any guy, shee? . . .

PETER DE VRIES, of *The New Yorker,* has a delectable title for his new novel: "No, But I Saw the Movie." . . . Mrs. Robert Mosely sends in a story of an occurrence in 1919, at a certain university not far from the home territory of North Carolina's famous Jukes-like family. Because of financial difficulties, the choosiest fraternities had let down the bars, and admitted homespun lads from the other side of the tracks. One day, however, a brother turned up with a candidate who was a little bit too uncouth—a gangling giant, unkempt and wild looking, who tossed adjectives and food about with equal abandon. He was about to be blackballed unanimously when a report circulated that a visiting celebrity had hailed the furious youth as "probably a genius." The brethren decided to take a long chance—and elected Thomas Wolfe to membership. . . . Captain Harry Butcher, author of "My Three Years with Eisenhower," is the man who named F. D. R.'s radio speeches "Fireside Chats." Butcher says he is still trying to live down the day in a Freshman English course that he defined a virgin forest as "a place where no hand of man has ever set foot." . . .

DEAN CARL ACKERMAN, of the Columbia School of Journalism, punched home the advantages of a clever sales approach with this story: Two beggars were soliciting alms on the same street. One of them was getting five out of every six donations. Investigation disclosed a printed sign on the successful beggar's cup that read, "It is a beautiful day in May—and I am blind."

BENNETT CERF.

"From where I sit"

IT IS perhaps an indication of intellectual self-defense that we call ourselves modern—the term explains away a multitude of sins. It means that we are too lazy to look backwards for proof that only in some ways do we do original thinking. Every age has probably felt that it was modern, and yet, the idea of "One World," for instance, is not new, it is definitely pre-Willkie.

In fact it is Alexandrian. To be sure, in **Alexander of Macedon's** world (356-323 BC) the Western Hemisphere was unknown. Before he had reached the ripe old age of thirty-three, this Homer-fan had placed himself, without benefit of juke box, at the head of Asia Minor, Persia or Iran (where he ran into some stiff national opposition—don't we all), northern India, and the only part of Europe that amounted to anything. He had become master of his "One World," a position which then and ever since brought him only the extremes of blind worship or blind hate. There was no middle ground with young Alexander.

HAROLD LAMB succeeds in the very difficult task of lifting the marble shroud of antiquity and myth from the young man who walked and talked and got a manner of thinking from Aristotle. It seems to be a lucky team, HAROLD LAMB and **Alexander of Macedon,** a thread beneath the dust of two thousand years. Because by a curious degeneration, there seems to be no charm left in our time, and nothing but charm left in the notion of antiquity. In fact we are so devoid of charm that we have to seek parallels with our own age in order to be convinced that such charm as was once possessed was in any sense real. What a paradox! Yet LAMB is able to meet its demands. He shows us that this has always been "One World"; that Alexander's "One World" was modern even to the point of letting conquered peoples determine and retain their own forms of government. Yet in spite of modernity, the scientific pursuit of knowledge possessed a charm with which only the cloak of exotic antiquity could have covered its very naïve, hard-boiled, and modern people.

I leave now for Scythian shores with the question, will our age ever be considered charming? Quaint little juke box!

paul

DOUBLEDAY

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Seeing Things

THE ORDER OF THE RUPTURED DUCK

SHE was sitting behind me. I could not see her or the man with her. The house lights had already dimmed. I don't suppose what she looked like as an individual matters. Her words did matter, however, since so many people seem to share her feelings. I kept wishing the author of "Tommy Atkins" were still alive and sitting near enough to overhear her.

"I always get a great laugh out of the Army," she giggled. "Of course, that is except in wartime—and then I always get a great cry."

Before she could develop this idea, the asbestos curtain at the National was up and we were all laughing; laughing although no actors had as yet appeared. We were laughing at the gay distortion of the Discharge Button with which Lester Polakov, until recently a first lieutenant with a B-26 group in Sardinia and Corsica, had enlivened the drop curtain for "Call Me Mister."*

As almost everyone must know by now, "Call Me Mister" is the revue written, staged, and performed by young people just out of the services. It is, if you will, an Army, Navy, Air Corps, Marine, WAC, WAVE, and USO show. But it remains only military enough to have conquered New York. As the title makes clear, reconversion is its theme—the reconversion of men and women to civilian life.

It sheds no tears for the uniformed years that are gone. Its mood is the mood of peace. Its performers troop away from the colors with gleeful irreverence. The train they ride is the "Going Home Train"—a good one to be aboard. They are jubilant—who isn't?—to have the war over. They live under a new order. As they rhyme it, "dramatic critics have more power over us than Eisenhower." They are uncertain as to whether to describe the eagle fluttering in the circle of their Discharge Buttons, in the common phrase, as a "ruptured duck" or a "bird of paradise." Happy days are obviously here again for them, and, because of them, here for playgoers too.

The show through which these young people romp is a lively one, healthy and unsparing in its spoofing. It serves as a ventilator for gripes, both familiar and new. It blows the lid with something of Bill Mauldin's steam. It is too far removed from the feeling and atmosphere of combat to produce a Willie and Joe. Yet its spirit is as young as Mauldin's; its sanity as marked; and its thrusts can often claim his accuracy. If it is better-natured than "Up Front," it is because its scene is now back home. The threat of death has been removed; so has the thought of it.

Tough sergeants, Army redtape, young officers whose commissions are far too big for them, guys who were drips when they joined up and who come out (a sure sign that peace is here) not as heroes but as—drips, and (in one of the funniest numbers) the Noel Coward life in an Air Corps bar—all of these get their astringent, Sad Sack *going over*.

"Call Me Mister" is too shrewd, however, to limit its laughs to the military. Civilians cannot be ignored in a revue dealing with young people, coming home, whose one hope is to be civilians once again. The point of such a show is not facing the enemy on the field of battle. It is re-meeting one's self and one's friends in the world of which one was once a part.

There is an immensely diverting skit, for example, about a G.I.'s homecoming. The parents in this instance, as in all too many cases, have been over-exposed to sombre literature telling them how to treat a returning veteran. They are convinced that their son will come home an abnormal creature, a victim of battle fatigue. They are expecting—more accurately, looking forward to—the worst, and are prepared for it.

The magazine articles the father has read have convinced him he must try to make his boy forget that he has been away or that there has been a war. Those the mother has devoured have persuaded her she must convince her son that she, too, has been "in the fight," sharing his every experience. Accordingly, when she answers the summons of the doorbell, she greets him as a figure more terrifying than the toughest top sergeant. Her head is hidden in a helmet, from her hips dangle two revolvers (not pearl-handled), and her voice is a cross between reveille and the provost marshal's.

—*Graphic House*

"'Call Me Mister' serves as a ventilator for gripes . . . blows the lid with something of Bill Mauldin's style."

Southern senators, the miraculous act of purchasing "civvies," the housing shortage, employment lines where racial discrimination raises its worse than ugly head, and the sailor home from the sea to make the acquaintance of his new-born son also fit as needed pieces into the jigsaw of "Call Me Mister."

In the enacting of these sketches Betty Garrett, Jules Munshin, Harry Clark, and Lawrence Winters figure prominently, variously, and well. They, and the returnees surrounding them, have about them the freshness, the bounce, and the expertness which distinguished the young performers long ago in "The Grand Street Follies" and "The Garrick Gaieties," and, more recently, in "Pins and Needles."

Although some of the numbers, such as the one dealing with what would happen to Paul Revere had he been confronted with khaki officialdom at the moment of his not unpublicized ride, or the drowsy interlude during which Mr. Munshin suggests what would happen to Maurice Evans if he were a train announcer, sink to the level of Amateur Night, the production as a whole has a decided and welcome merit.

This merit manifests itself in more than the tonic glibness of several of Arnold Auerbach's skits, and in the buoyancy of most of the acting and dancing. It also makes itself felt (which is not exactly surprising) in song after song by Harold Rome, and in the brilliant and quickening suggestion of Mr. Polakov's highly imaginative settings.

*CALL ME MISTER, a revue. Presented by Melvyn Douglas and Herman Levin. Music and Lyrics by Harold Rome. Sketches by Arnold Auerbach. Directed by Robert H. Gordon. Dances by John Wray. Musical Direction by Lehman Engel. Scenery by Lester Polakov. Costumes by Grace Houston. With Betty Garrett, Jules Munshin, Bill Calahan, Lawrence Winters, George Hall, Harry Clark, etc. At the National.

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KERN AND HAMMERSTEIN'S
"Show Boat"
Music by JEROME KERN
Book and Lyrics by OSCAR HAMMERSTEIN 2nd
Based on the novel by EDNA FERBER
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Frank Fay in 'Harvey'
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Directed by ANTOINETTE PERRY
48th St. Thea., E. of B'y. Evs. 8:40 sharp. Mats. Wed. & Sat. 2:40

"Musical wow of the season." Walter Winchell
PAULA STONE & HUNT STROMBERG, Jr. present
VICTOR HERBERT'S
Most Famous Musical Comedy
The RED MILL
EDDIE FOY, JR.
Jack Whiting, Odette Myrtil, Dorothy Stone
46th ST. THEATRE—W. of Bway.—CI 6-6075
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"A dream of a play"—John Chapman, News
ELMER RICE'S
New Comedy
Dream Girl
with HAILA STODDARD
Wendell Corey — Evelyn Varden
CORONET, W. 49. Eves. 8:30, Mats. Wed. & Sat.

A play of tremendous dramatic impact
ON WHITMAN AVENUE
with CANADA LEE
WILL GEER
and a brilliant cast
CORT Thea., 48th St. E. of B'way.; BR. 9-0046
Ev'gs. 8:40. Matinees WED. & SAT. at 2:40

What is perhaps worthy of at least a distressed footnote is the failure of all of the sentimental numbers, with the exception of the "Going Home Train." Even Mr. Rome's "The Face on the Dime," which is meant to be a successor to his "Franklin D. Roosevelt Jones," suffers the sad fate which the bromide demands of sequels.

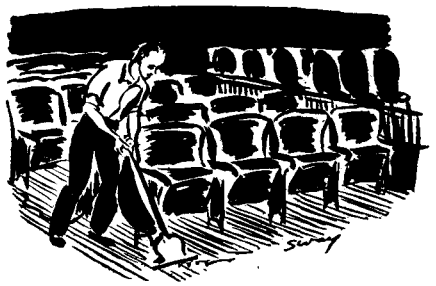
This is symptomatic of the times. And healthy because natural. No doubt it is unreasonable to expect the ecstasy of the war emotion to be carried over into the days of peace; especially into the first days when every human hope is centered upon the renewal of normal living at the very point at which normal living was interrupted, if not halted, by the war.

Unquestionably, it is both enjoyable and exciting to be reminded, as no one can help being reminded by "Call Me Mister," of how sanitary, full-blooded, and steadfast is the American sense of humor. We do not have to worry about the development of a military caste in this country so long as the by-product of a global war can be such a revue. Our irreverence is one of the most blessed of our national possessions. Only a victorious, well-fed, and optimistic people, sprung from a race of Last Minute Men, and nurtured on a tradition of free speech, could have produced such a show at such a moment.

More than offering a diverting evening, "Call Me Mister" provides in many ways an incredible one. It is less than a year since all of us huddled around our radios to hear the news of the surrender on the *Missouri*. Yet already, and perhaps inevitably, the funeral bak'd meats of the war have furnished forth a feast of laughter.

The emergency is supposedly over. The guns are silent. Peace, or its illusions, walks a bruised earth. What was tearful only a few months back, to those who were not robbed forever, is now a jest. The more earnestly the war was felt, the more it is to be laughed at. The deeper its wounds, the lighter we are supposed to take them. Now is the time, evidently, to join the party and forget the blood, the sweat, and the tears. Laughter is the normal, the healthy, the historic corrective.

All veterans become ridiculous, if



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only they live long enough. The heroes, whose words once were hung upon, dwindle into bores. They become comic in the feebleness of their old age because of the world's forgetfulness. It has neither the time nor the inclination to recall where or why they fought, and cannot be bothered with remembering. Even most of them do not want to remember, at least not too often. As a place in which to dwell, the past is at once as dangerous as it is ridiculous.

The thunder of gunfire and the music of welcoming bands end up as the perfunctory eloquence of Memorial Day addresses. What was honest sentiment in moments of danger or separation becomes deplorable sentimentality in the fat years of security. In the interest of progress no less than of their own sanity, the inheritors of those who have suffered have no other choice than to develop a protective amnesia, and to grin at past anguishes and take them lightly.

This is why it is better in "Call Me Mister" to find these young veterans of so recent a conflict smiling irresistibly at themselves. Their laughter would be even more contagious if only the world, in which they and their audiences find themselves laughing, were also a laughing world.

JOHN MASON BROWN.

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Double Talk in Ancient China

PEONY. By Keith West. New York: The Macmillan Company. 1946. 213 *pp.* $2.

Reviewed by SARA HENDERSON HAY

KEITH WEST is a professor, a scholar of ancient Chinese, and a collector, the book jacket tells us, of Chinese bronze and embroidery. His new novel has much of the delicacy, the formality, the exquisite, stylized decorative quality of an oriental tapestry. It is a picture of Chinese life and custom of perhaps a thousand years ago—we are not told the exact period—and it is as exotic and as removed from modern realism as the figures on a Chinese screen. It is particularly the story of Peony, the daughter of Chiang Seung, Magistrate of the Southern District, of the City of Rams, in the Province of the Eastern Territory. Peony's feet were not bound, though such was the usual custom for a girl of the aristocracy, and her mind and her will were likewise untrammelled. Peony was a rebel, with a determination to achieve her own desires which was as irresistible as water seeking its level. When her little brother's tutor instructed him in the classics, Peony sat by and absorbed a great deal more than did Chiang Luk.

Peony early discovered how the strict formalities of tradition could thwart her unless she took matters into her own hands. Because by chance she met, before the marriage broker had concluded the contract, the boy to whom she was promised, custom was outraged and the match was off. But Peony had fallen in love with Wei Ho at that first unpropitious glance, and she ran away and spent the night with him. That the occupation of that night was merely a most formal and elegantly phrased conversation did not keep it from being a scandalous episode. But Wei Ho was kidnapped and murdered by bandits, thus enshrining himself in Peony's mind as not only her first love but her first tragedy.

Next, because she wanted "never again to have her thoughts colored and controlled by what she did not know" she gave herself to the tutor, but he, being a timorous and much less direct person than Peony, was a disillusioning experiment. When she was finally married off to a sedate and dull scholar she still pursued her relentless independence, though it became less an adventure of physical experience than a growing into intellectual freedom and wisdom.

This is an intricate and sophisticated story, told in such an extremely formalized and subtle style that it is sometimes a little difficult to know what is really going on. When the Governor of the Province, for instance, propositions Peony and when she accepts him, it is all done in so mannered and elaborate a fashion that the reader is apt to be lost in a maze of circumlocution, quotations from the Chinese classics, and polite double talk.

Mr. West's book has charm and wit, but it is for those who have a decided taste for its own special flavor. Readers jaded with modern forthrightness and clipped dialogue will find the long allusive speeches, the excessive classicism and formality, the stylized, antique decorative style, wholly delightful. Others, and I am afraid I am one of them, may find it occasionally over-elaborate and tedious.

On the X-Ray

By Tsung-Hai Cheng

Originally composed in regular classical Chinese meters and now freely paraphrased into English.

IN THE boundless cosmos don't you look through the aperture of an oyster and think that you have surveyed the whole?
And who is there that tackles a whale and brings in a big catch from the blue sea?
Mirages, now revealing and then vanishing, are they really only illusions?
Rather dive deep down into Dragon's mosaic court, and seek for yourself the Pearl.
By its help you will see what man never yet saw, penetrating to the very bones,
You will detect every flaw, wrought by the demon's power, better than by burning tusks of ivory.
However tiny the waves may be, with that talisman in hand,
Among the myriad gateways and ten thousand palaces you will never get lost.

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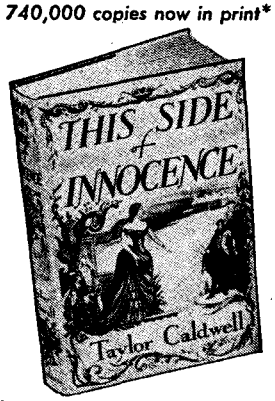

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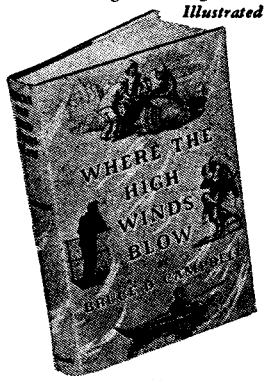

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With Feet of Clay

LUTHER BURBANK: A Victim of Hero Worship. By Walter L. Howard. Waltham, Mass: Chronica Botanica Co. 1946. 204 pp. $3.75.

Reviewed by NORMAN TAYLOR

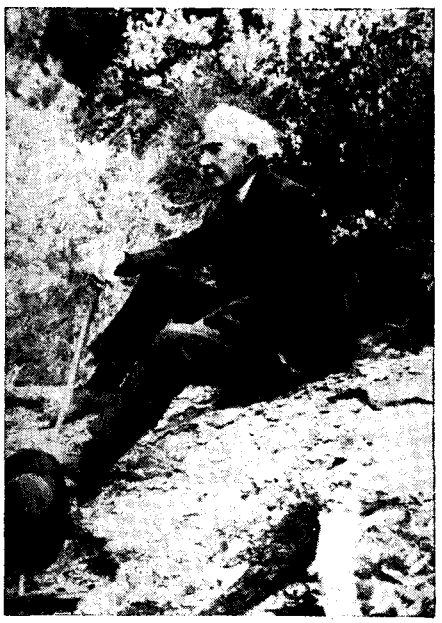
THE possession by one of his colleagues of "great dexterity in delusion and imposture" quite naturally aroused the scorn of Francis Bacon, as it has of scientists ever since. But, especially where plants are concerned, we swallow both delusion and imposture, because "the marvellous is well relished, particularly when it promises us very useful matters." Who, for instance, is ever quite immune to the luscious absurdities of our seed catalogues?

It would be easy to say, and it has been said by many scientists, that our greatest exponent of delusion and imposture was Luther Burbank, the subject of this biography. There is no doubt that he was deluded, likening himself once to Napoleon and another time stopping short only at the blasphemous notion of his approaching the stature of Christ. As to imposture, his only modern competitor is Lysenko, the "Russian Burbank," whose marvels the Soviet Embassy regularly feeds out to our more gullible newspapers.

The author of this biography does not damn Burbank for either delusion or imposture, although most of his colleagues have done so for thirty years, including this reviewer. Dr. Howard, long the director of the College of Agriculture at the University of California, began a study of Burbank upon the sensible theory that it was unfair to deride him for ignorance of chomosomes, his naivete about Mendel, the lack of a microscope, and his complete befuddlement about the mutation theory. These concepts, and the disciplines that go with them, were far beyond the competence of Burbank, and he is to be judged not for the lack of them, but by his accomplishments.

These were many and valuable. In the listing and appraisal of them, Dr. Howard has performed an important piece of work, originally published as Bulletin No. 691 of the Agricultural Experiment Station at Berkeley. In the present volume there is a workable abridgment of this, of chief interest to professional horticulturists, although it should be recorded that some of Burbank's varieties have been of outstanding importance to commercial growers in California, South Africa and Australia.

But hundreds of his varieties were valueless and thousands of the claims



Luther Burbank, "our greatest exponent of delusion . . . his only modern competitor is Lysenko, the 'Russian Burbank.'"

made for them were false—facts long known to many, but completely unknown to that multitude of Americans who make Burbank's name worldwide in notoriety, if not in eminence. From 1900 until his death in 1926, no name was more widely known, even revered, than Burbank's. His name is now verbalized in Webster's dictionary: "To modify and improve (plants or animals) . . . hence (figuratively) to improve anything."

How, one may ask, did this legendary figure grow to such huge proportions, convicted as he was of "delusion and imposture"? Burbank, far beyond his horticultural attainments, has become a symbol in American life more discreditable to us than to him. For it shows us to be gifted with an enormous capacity to swallow bunk, to snowball the Burbank reputation, because, as that critical French scientist Duhamel du Monceau put it in 1754, "the marvellous is well relished."

It was the realization of all this that led Dr. Howard to write this admirable biography of Burbank. It is as objective as one could expect, considering the spectacular failings of the protagonist. Here you will read the sordid details of the spineless cactus fiasco, and of the Luther Burbank Press, with its hundreds of thousands of deluded stockholders who lost every cent of their subscriptions. Here are recorded the details of the equally unsavory Luther Burbank Company, organized to market his "new creations."

One whole section of the book is devoted to the grant made by the Carnegie Institution to record Burbank's technique, its withdrawal, and the failure of the Carnegie people ever to publish the results of that grant. Apparently, in the face of the mounting protests of American scientists, it became somewhat too embarrassing for the institution to admit its initial mistake in making the grant. Its failure to publish is a pity, for Burbank left practically no writings except the score or so of his nursery and seed catalogues.

What was written *about* him is, according to Dr. Howard, the cause of what amounts to the Burbank debacle. The effusions of the Luther Burbank press (twelve volumes of fulsome praise and uncritical claims), the absurdities of Harwood's "New Creations in Plant Life," the enormous amount of newspaper publicity—these made of Burbank, according to his biographer, "A Victim of Hero Worship." To those who wonder why the "plant wizard" permitted such monstrous exploitation, the present volume has no answer. It admits defects of character, but by implication allows one to think that Burbank was the helpless recipient of all this adulation. This stretches one's credulity, especially when the author says: "It is my understanding that he had to give his approval to all that was written before it was finally published." Scarcely any other comment is necessary.

LITERARY I.Q. ANSWERS

1. Cypress. Arnold: Sohrab and Rustum.
2. Candle-flame. Browning: The Pied Piper.
3. Poppies. Burns: Tom O'Shanter.
4. Night. Byron: She Walks in Beauty.
5. Turk. Carey: Sally in Our Alley.
6. Tea-tray. Carroll: Alice in Wonderland.
7. School-boys. Guy W. Carryl: Little Boy Blue.
8. Three-years' child. Coleridge: The Ancient Mariner.
9. Book. Emily Dickinson.
10. Wind. Fitzgerald: The Rubaiyat.
11. Watcher. Keats: On First Looking Into Chapman's Homer.
12. Fairy-flax. Longfellow: Wreck of the Hesperus.
13. Cherry. Clement Moore: A Visit from St. Nicholas.
14. Snake. Pope: Essay on Criticism.
15. Corn. Rossetti: The Blessed Damozel.
16. Dome. Shelley: Adonais.
17. Mice. Suckling: Ballad on a Wedding.
18. Smoke. Tennyson: The Lotos Eaters.
19. Madman. Wilde: Ballad of Reading Gaol.
20. Nun. Wordsworth: It Is a Beauteous Evening.

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History, Humor, Faith

DISCERNING THE SIGNS OF THE TIMES. By Reinhold Niebuhr. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. 1946. 206 pp. $2.50.

Reviewed by S. HARRINGTON LITTELL

IT may be presumed that most people have a good enough aim in life. Many of them, however, fail to pull the trigger. Others, with the best of intentions, go off half-cocked. The cautious disciplined author of the volume before us, exhilarated in the chase for big game, knows where the best hunting grounds are, which kind of game is most worth tracking, and not least, when to fire.

Fully accepting scientific revelations of truth, the author is convinced that scientific temper without a philosophy that has room for values which cannot be weighed on scales, or boiled in test tubes, or released from invisible atoms, is inadequate. Our next great discoveries of truth await dauntless spiritual adventures in the realm of matter.

Professor Niebuhr, with definite plausibility, seeks to interpret aspects of the Christian faith, not only as it is found throughout human history and even transcending the limits of "history," but more specifically, in terms of its special relevance to the deepening thought and intricate complexities in the expanding life of our day. The eras from Adam to atom have led to "The Age Between the Ages." Our new era embraces "Today, Tomorrow, and The Eternal." He handles such subjects, journeying through time and space, having first (in the title-discourse) erected clearly-marked signposts for "Discerning the Signs of the Times."

We can agree with certain critics who consider the most brilliant chapters to be "Mystery and Meaning" and "The Power and the Weakness of God," noting particularly Niebuhr's characteristic use of clever paradox, in fine form here.

The present reviewer has found the theme "Humor and Faith" particularly happy in its treatment. Not that Dr. Niebuhr can be considered hilarious at any time, certainly not in indicating the detachment and the balance in mind and heart of which humor is an indispensable safeguard. He does allow, moreover, even to the Creator a sense of fun. (We recall the Arab story: "What did Allah say when he finished creating the camel?" "He didn't say a thing: He only laughed." The rhinoceros is comical too; and for real mirth, members of the simian family at play show that genuine humor is not accidental in

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the creation.) This sermon is powerful, and its fresh presentation of humor inseparably linked with faith is a steadying antidote to the frightened state of mind in the present moment of history.

Dr. Niebuhr never fails to make his meaning clear. There is no indecision in his thought, nor in the expression of it: nothing neutral. When he doesn't know, he says so: positive even in his negations. When he is convinced, he proclaims it. When he faces indecision he is willing to take the risks on the word of countless other adventurers past and present; and having accepted orders from his acknowledged chief, finds that he too has arrived.

The book stands in the forefront of the present-day output of live, practical, interpretative literature.

Australian Folks

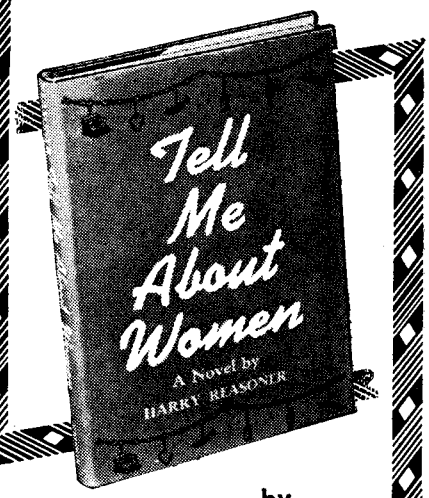
LOST HAVEN. By Kylie Tennant. New York: The Macmillan Co. 1946. 406 pp. $3.

Reviewed by R. L. NORTH

MISS TENNANT'S "Lost Haven" is a sort of cove on the coast of Australia, geographically locked away from the mainland by rocks and tide and the heights of Mount Abraham. The inhabitants are practically island folk—crotchety, self-reliant, growing a set of behaviorisms and speech-habits as though they were a new species. And Miss Tennant is their gay historian. She takes them from their very beginnings, when there were only two families to vie for Lost Haven dominance, the Sudermanns and the Thornes, and traces the strains down to their third and fourth generations. There are certain dramatic incidents to highlight the story, such as the struggle of the Sudermann brothers, Alec and Kelly, for a wife they hold in common.

Their chief function is to exhibit the people of Lost Haven in their natural terrain, at work or at odds, clashing amongst themselves or with nature on Australia's rocky coast. Miss Tennant's best pages are those apparently irrelevant to the dramatic plan; they are descriptions of Alec alone upon his boat, or Jamaica in her kitchen, or young Len and his horse, or Benison, the city dweller, brooding among the hills upon her lost birthright, or merely the atmosphere of Lost Haven, the color of the sea or the scent of the brush. Miss Tennant is like the people of her story, light-hearted and fierce in her love of the country.

". . . . the best novel about the war generation that I have yet read." —**Clip Boutell**



by

Harry Reasoner

To Joe Wilson the world was made up of bourbon and beer, clever remarks and easy blondes, the city desk and the Oregon bar. He had a shell that served him as a defense —against women and life and too much thinking. It was Maris who punctured his shell, made him drop his guard. It was a roller-coaster courtship, a whirlwind marriage, a slow torturous awakening.

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A Strange Brotherhood

YEAR ONE. By Elizabeth Delehanty. New York: E. P. Dutton & Co. 1946. 215 pp. $2.50.

Reviewed by PFC. ARTHUR C. FIELDS

ARMY hospitals are imposing edifices. But like prisons and other public institutions, they are buildings that are quickly passed by with a sense of foreboding, with a knowledge that all is not quite right within. And while Army hospitals are maintained ostensibly for the welfare of those whom they serve, part of this uneasy attitude is transferred to the occupants within as they realize that they are still isolated from the outside world. With that initial realization, the men begin to retire, to crowd together, as the estrangement of the outside world makes itself felt; a strange brotherhood develops—a brotherhood established to "stand doggedly against the unmutilated world."

Such a situation is unavoidable, but whichever way you look at it, it is not a pleasant picture. It is unfortunate, but true, that as soon as the war is over the public tries as best it can to forget. And one of the first forgotten items is the wounded man who, but for a twist of fate, might also have been part of this uninterested majority. His is a pitiful story punctuated by marked lack of public concern, yet he is still a chapter in a notorious history of civic neglect.

With such a background to work from, Miss Delehanty should have been able to produce an interesting book. Certainly, if nothing else, "Year One" could have been important as both sociological and psychiatric study. Unfortunately, this is not the case. Perhaps it is the age-old problem of an abundance, rather than a lack, of material to work from; but whatever it was, a serious study in mental treatment is rudely and quite unnecessarily turned into a crude murder-mystery-love formula.

Actually, Miss Delehanty managed to crack the impressive exterior of the military hospital and produce from it something more humane than a routine account of a monotonous existence. Had the author been content to make "Year One" a story of the rehabilitation of Andy, a soldier struck mute in combat (which, by the way, is an important enough tale in itself), perhaps the story would have held more validity. Unfortunately, one of Miss Delehanty's troubles is that she hits too many nails on the head and then forgets to drive them home.

Thus we have the problem of Luke, a disappointed artist, defeated in his own art and completely disillusioned by the callousness of the Army. He "had not lived long enough to realize any dream; too few of his hopes had come to flower. He had not reached a point in life, a point of accomplishment, after which death might have been acceptable." Then there was Mac the radio announcer, where "conflict lay in the need to choose between altered and far more competitive business conditions in a now changed world, and a possible career in the Army." And finally, there was Andy. Andy the abused, Andy the sufferer, above all, Andy the silent hero. With a cast of characters like that, "Count Me Among the Living," "The Snake Pit," or a similar psychological effort would seem to be in the making. Instead, what the author has accomplished is a conglomeration of partially developed characters.

Why the lives of a psychiatric case, a nurse in love, a forward-looking doctor, and an entire medical board are not plot-interest enough for any short book is incomprehensible to me. But if more complications are needed, why of all things was a murder mystery (in a hospital) chosen? We not only find men dying from battle wounds; we also encounter a mysterious "mercy killer." Perhaps Miss Delehanty felt the same way about it all, judging by her solution.

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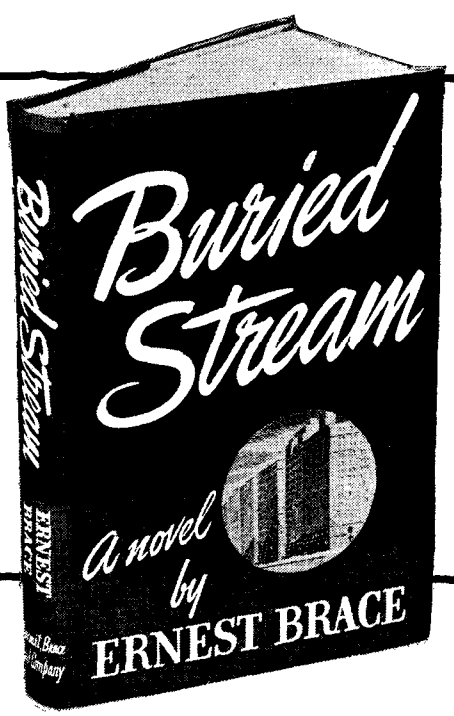

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HEARING THINGS

FOLK SONG—REAL AND FAKED

THE first rays of the sun appear and are welcomed with song; sun, earth, and life are greeted by the son of nature, who sings, for he is newly born every day. Children swing their joined hands and hum themselves into fairyland; the farmer sings to the rhythm of his work; the cowboy strums his guitar, and the cottonpicker sings of Zion. Far from the warmth of the home, the soldiers sing in the barracks of the faithful and the heartless girl; when the day grows older, the taverns are populated, and as alcohol loosens the tongue, sentiment pours from unaccustomed throats. Song soars from one end of the world to the other; what an incredible symphony it would make if we could hear it all together—the square dance of the Earth to which humanity furnishes the music!

Primitive man lets out a yell and the echo hits his ears. He likes the sound and tries it again and again. His children learn it from him and play the game somewhat better, and are in turn surpassed by their progeny.

Still, it is a long way from the sensuous sonority of the single tone to the shaping of these single tones to each other in such a way as to make a sequence pleasing to the ear. But man possesses further the power to place the vocal cords in the service of something more deeply rooted, to fuse word and tone and then to connect this newly won organism with that invisible and unplayable musical instrument we call soul.

Folk song has two trunks. Word and song can be separated, but their life is organic and complete only when they are joined, because they spring together from mystic regions, one the interpreter of the other. Together they offer something that neither could give by itself, for the song is the crystallization of feelings that the words alone could not mirror, that come to life only when sung. Since its origin is instinctive, there are no bad folk songs. Folk music may characterize certain stages of cultural development, low or high—certain peoples or races, certain circumstances and mental dispositions—but it is always perfect in its own way, for it carries in it the primordial, unfading properties of artistic creation. Humanity hides the secrets of artistic perfection in the humble folk song, and as the poet receives material from human speech and language, so does the musician from folk music.

Folk music is the ancestral material of all "art" music, both in its content and forms; the composer turns to it as does the sculptor to the human body, for folk music too is nature transsubstantiated. The painter's materials embrace everything that is visible, the musician claims everything that can be heard. As the painter does not utilize raw nature itself for his subject but that nature which in his vision is transformed into artistic matter, so the musician shapes songs from sounds that have been transformed from bare physical phenomena to sounds for the human ear.

Painters and musicians alike see and hear not the merely natural, but idealized Nature as it was given to man to see and to hear; these are their eternal conventions to start with. Such conventions for the musicians are the tonalities, melodies, and formal arrangements of folk music, for our art music is folk music raised to a higher sphere; the developing of the kernels, the individual discovery and fructification according to the collective dictates of a higher society of those universal human desires that are hidden in folk music. (That folk song represents at the same time national aspirations, and that national characteristics constitute an indispensable element of art, goes without saying.)

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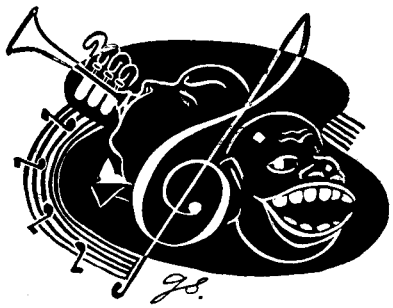
Modern musical scholarship is very much concerned with the degree and manner in which the art music of every epoch borrowed from the music of the people. Gregorian research has proved that the music of the earlier Middle Ages was saturated with popular musical elements from the Near and Middle East, as well as with Italian folk music. The great style period known as the era of the Netherlands drew on Gregorian music and on Western European folk song. The exquisite dance forms we encounter in the delicately worked compositions of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries are in fact idealized folk dances, and as to the musical naturalism of the eighteenth century, it represents nothing other than the emancipation of folk music. Things begin to be different in the nineteenth century, for the popular tone of the romantic era is often patently imitation, and, finally, our own century created the fake folk song, produced by a large and thriving industry.

Every nation that prizes its artistic achievements must see to it that its folk music receives the attention of competent scholars. Archives of folk song and unadulterated, scientifically correct, and conscientious publications fulfil a double purpose: they assemble a priceless cultural heritage, thus saving it from oblivion, and they furnish valuable data to the serious composer, who will gain both inspiration and actual materials. The educational value of such publications is of the greatest importance. Collections in use today in our schools are for the most part artistically worthless, musically



faulty, and like the majority of the hymns sung in our churches—first cousins of the faked folk song—lead to a polluted musical taste. Fortunately, besides the folk song charlatans we have a growing number of eminent scholars who devote their talents to this work (which ceases to be lucrative the minute it permits no license) and we have some very fine collections in our libraries and colleges. The Music Division of the Library of Congress does yeoman work with its Folk Song Archives. They all deserve much more recognition, and above all, support, from all of us, for if we do not salvage the existing folk song material from the backwoods and hills, the radio and the Broadway and Hollywood arrangers will mangle it in a short time beyond redemption.

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By calculus and wit,
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Which in the month of May would grow
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Circus Tale

SHEBA ON TRAMPLED GRASS. By Tom Powers. Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Co. 1946. 244 pp. $2.50.

Reviewed by JAMES PLAYSTED WOOD

THE tale opens two days after the Kentucky Derby in a bar on Jefferson Street where two men drink and talk and a third watches and listens. It moves next morning to the foot of Fourth Street where Unc Bevin's wonderful horses had been unloaded from an Ohio River Boat, then to the old Portland section, down near Shawnee Park, where the carnival is being set up. Later the carnival is shifted to New Albany on the Indiana side of the river, but the story stays in and around Louisville.

Tex, rodeo rider, who had been injured in a spill and can no longer perform, tells it with many excuses for his not knowing about books and words, and the story he tells is good. "Sheba on Trampled Grass," though it works with the familiar circus ingredients and beyond that with some of the oldest material known to fiction, has shock power and dramatic force, firm narrative, and the power to elicit both belief and sympathy. Fixed to Louisville as a place, the universal story which is fantasy, melodrama, and circus life behind the scenes gains realism it might not otherwise have had.

Black MacGrieff's shabby carnival had almost everything: the Human Rocket, the Paris Girlies, the Girl Who Soars to the Moon, the midget educated by the lamas in Tibet, the Wise Woman, the African Chieftain who fought with the Wild Panther, Miss Hortensia the elephant, Tatters the Diving Dog—and Bathsheba, the "World's Most Beautiful Victim of a Vindictive Villainous Madman." They, as all carnival and circus folk in every such story, are pathetically human behind their grotesqueness. In "Sheba on Trampled Grass" they are simply and very strongly marked; they are like the characters in an old morality, and the action moves as it might in one of the old dramas. Virtue battles vice, and goodness overcomes evil in the end.

Despite the modern trappings, the modern talk, the contemporary scene, and the up-to-date injection of a flier with combat fatigue, "Sheba on Trampled Grass" is a very old story. That makes it none the worse. The author of "Virgin with Butterflies" has successfully contrived to make it original, fresh, and readable.

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Man in Search of Himself

BURIED STREAM. By Ernest Brace. New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co. 1946. 290 pp. $2.50.

Reviewed by NATHAN L. ROTHMAN

SOMEWHERE along the way in his history David Rayney, chief protagonist of this novel, remarks, "But I'm no Hamlet—" The point is, however, that he is precisely that, a Hamlet of modern times. Not that Mr. Brace has written anything to place beside Shakespeare. His David Rayney is as talkative and self-analytical as Hamlet, but that talk is pretty prosy much of the time, and the analysis about one layer below the skin. Yet Mr. Brace's book is impressive because of what it attempts to do. It is a serious work pitched consistently upon an adult level; it avoids the easy compromises of entertainment, it comes to grips with thinking about things; it evades no problems.

For a sensitive, thoughtful, and keenly self-conscious man, David Rayney has worked himself into a set of circumstances most calculated to sandpaper him every move he makes. He is a public-relations counsellor—supposedly one of the good ones—which means he must spend his creative hours in making palatable the works and days of the most corrupt men of power in the country. He is married to a sleek, impregnable woman, of great fashion and beauty and no sympathy. She can needle him into a fury at any time, and hold him with his love for her. Her own love is for their son, Sam, who is the other side of the coin from David, secure in his extrovert consciousness of strength. David moves from wife to son to job in growing tension and malaise, like an alien particle moving between repellent poles. Something there is in him that carries an unspoken message of another life, a kind of truth he has not yet experienced, a buried stream somewhere. Reaching toward it, David clashes first with the wealthiest of his clients. Then his relations with his wife, which have been degenerating steadily, break to overt warfare. With his son, who has come into the office and taken hold in easy freedom from scruples that have hampered David, he maintains an uncomfortable truce. But there is no peace or certainty for him anywhere, and even a fleeting love affair with a charming and understanding young girl cannot provide haven for him.

It is only when David discovers that it is an actual place in the fight he wants that some strength comes back to him. He has been living in two camps, serving the one with his time and strength in the exploitation of money, and paying lip service to the other with mental curses upon his work and self-flagellation for his own hypocrisies. Just what these two worlds are is not clear to him—or to us—until the very end, when David steps, like a dreamer in response to a compulsion, into a fight to save a union-organizing Negro from being railroaded by the police. The event promises to have far-reaching consequences; it will complete the break between Rayney and his whole life of office and family. Yet it will bring him at last to the knowledge of that buried stream of life within him. He seems to be ending, like Hamlet, in a chosen and suicidal action. His story is endlessly real and timely: a man in search of himself and of that course of action which will best express the life in him. In modern terms it is more fumbling than heroic. This is the essence of Mr. Brace's modern tragedy: a maimed spirit stumbling among polished desks and seeking escape in a sixteen-cylinder car.

FRASER YOUNG'S
LITERARY CRYPT: No. 152

A cryptogram is writing in cipher. Every letter is part of a code that remains constant throughout the puzzle. Answer No. 152 will be found in the next issue.

P BGXGAPKCG OPX HMDF P

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Answer to Literary Crypt No. 151

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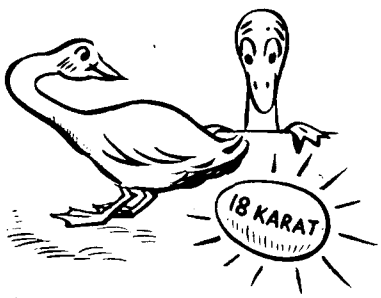

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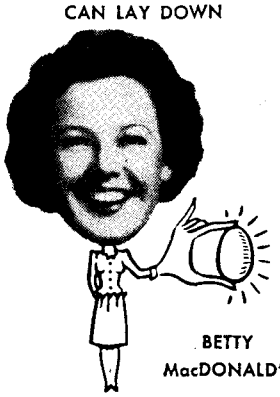

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THE PUBLIC DOMAIN OF THE AIR

(Continued from page 6)

businessmen, and it was the best thing that could have happened to him." That this shift, rather than any political animus of the FCC against business, may be responsible for tighter regulatory measures since the early thirties ought at least to be considered.

Today Hooper and Crossley ratings are avidly scanned by sponsor and station; but those magic touchstones "sponsor identification index" and "product use index" (that is, sales to listeners) are revered still more. The result is a slick professional product, tailored in a few centers like New York, Chicago, and Hollywood, trimmed to uniform specifications, and hampered by extreme timidity. Alexander Woollcott's sponsor, it will be recalled, took the Town Crier off the air in 1935 after he said some pretty tart things about Hitler and Mussolini. Proctor & Gamble—Maecenas of the soap opera, and the air waves' biggest advertiser, with an annual radio budget of $22 million—was lately described by the professional weekly *Broadcasting* as having "a policy never to offend a single listener." The symbolism of soap could hardly find a better instance.

The sustaining program is apt to be bolder, in both content and form. "The University of Chicago Round-Table" and "Invitation to Learning" are examples of the one. As for the latter, one could take a venture in experimental techniques like the "Columbia Workshop," lately revived after wartime suspension, or the work done by Rochester's WHAM to stimulate creative work by young musicians. Or in the broader field, where CBS and NBC deserve special credit, development of on-the-spot broadcasting in World War II. A program long nurtured as a sustaining feature, like "America's Town Meeting of the Air," may keep its quality under sponsorship; but a novel idea still in its infancy is prone to run foul of comparatively modest ratings, like "Request Performance" under the eyes of Campbell's Soup. U. S. Steel's current venture with the Theatre Guild on the air is one of the season's most heartening developments. The pessimism of these remarks is not meant to deny some very worthwhile achievements in the commercial field—witness the long record of "Information, Please," including the action of its producers in breaking with a notoriously blatant advertiser, maker of Lucky Strike cigarettes, several years ago, to seek a more congenial sponsor. (Last year the *New York Times* quoted the president of the American Tobacco Company as saying, "Taking 100 per cent as the total radio value, we give 90 per cent to commercials, to what's said for the product, and we give 10 per cent to the show . . . I don't have the right to spend the stockholders' money just to entertain the public.")

FRIENDLINESS of the FCC toward sustaining features comes basically not from a wish to cram highbrow culture down public throats, willy-nilly. Its main concern is for balanced programs (either in terms of a single station, or cluster of specialized stations in the same area), along with the rights of non-profit organizations to time on the air, and minority tastes and interests deserving their modicum of protection. Whatever one thinks about soap operas and other serials now filling fifty-seven per cent of day time on the networks—cheapest of all shows to produce, and best for continuous sponsor association ("Oxydol's Own Ma Perkins")—the determinant here is neither quality nor mass demand. It is simply all the aerial traffic will bear, up to a point of diminishing returns. (A six-month poll in 1944-45 found the average NBC soap opera drew only 8.4 per cent of the available audience, CBS only 6.7; three-quarters of the radio sets in America apparently are not turned on during soap opera hours.) The glut of a single-type program is not too healthy. Particularly in view of other interests not able to pay so well—local live talent, good music, discussion and debate, public health, religious activities, and community matters unsuited to salesmanship, such as veterans' rehabilitation. The rights of small squatters upon this public domain seem to be neglected.

Network sustaining programs generally are among the finest. They marshal radio's best talents in writing, composing, acting, and producing, and theoretically invite the whole nation to listen. In practice, however, a great many stations reject these offerings in favor of local commerce. "Invitation to Learning" on a specimen Sunday was carried by thirty-nine CBS stations and refused by ninety-seven—not, almost certainly, because they had weighed the matter in the scales of public interest and convenience, but because they could and did sell time to some local mortician or haberdasher. Sustaining programs tend increasingly to live upon the crumbs left from advertis-

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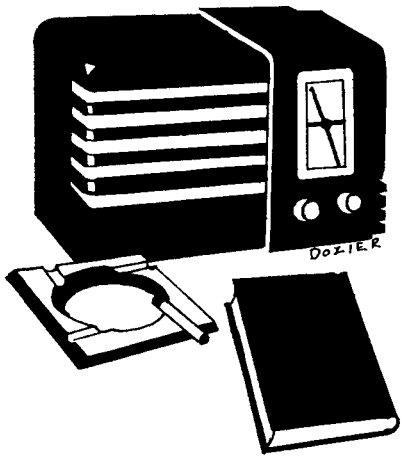
ing. Such programs still make up about forty-seven per cent of total broadcasting time in America, but the best listening hours, from six till eleven p.m., are rarely theirs. As these FCC charts vividly show, sustaining programs are apt to be pushed into the oubliettes of radio prestige —Saturday afternoon and Sunday morning. Larger stations, says the Report, are now carrying fewer sustaining programs than the smaller ones. Self-regulation by the industry, to require all stations to give a minimum of their best listening time, say an hour a day, to such programs—under the incentive of making them so good that listeners might not be lost to the sponsors that follow—would prove superior to any rules the FCC might try to impose.

This Report gives no hint that the Commission wants to hamstring or nationalize American radio. One of the least ambitious federal agencies, it is drunk neither with power nor with reformer's zeal. The FCC prefers to see radio rule its own house, so long as the ultimate leasehold from the public is clearly recognized. For the real pressure upon chains and stations, as the Report says, must come from listeners en masse. Yet public opinion polls today carry no very strong mandate. One recent survey registers majority dislike of the middle commercial, but another indicates general satisfaction with the over-all service of the American radio.

Probably the greatest need on this score, as suggested by the Report, is for professional radio critics. New books and plays—which reach mere thousands, to radio's daily tens of millions—have their regular appraisers. But beyond some honest work done by *Variety*, radio criticism has been scant, perfunctory, spasmodic. (Some of us remember that series of sub-acid radio reviews Ring Lardner did for *The New Yorker* fourteen years ago, while he lay dying.) Frank criticism over the air of radio's own programs is almost unthinkable—although such a review in the same medium would have both use and pungency. Only the other day a sacred cow from this herd was first lassoed, when Albert L. Warner, news chief of Mutual's WOL in Washington, attacked a fellow commentator who had talked into the same microphone a few hours earlier. Such plain speaking as "Where you find greed, selfishness, and stupidity, there you will find Upton Close," suggested that one rule of professional immunity is crumbling. But chances look pretty remote that radio will ever become its own best severest critic.

A recent seven months' visit to Australia and New Zealand has given the writer several new points of



reckoning. Australia, which prides itself upon being *au courant* with both Britain and the United States, characteristically has a dual system of broadcasting. The government chain, the ABC, leans toward classical music and educational features (with some 200,000 schoolchildren listening daily). It produces some excellent programs, and helps not only musicians but a few promising writers, in a country where opportunities of self-support by the pen are small indeed. About half the radio-listening public turns to one of the thirty-two stations of the ABC for its news. But for popular music and light entertainment, fully eighty per cent go to one or more of the ninety-nine commercial broadcasting stations in Australia. The quality of these stations is suggested in a statement made last December by the head of the Federation of Commercial Stations before the Parliamentary Committee on Broadcasting: "We are not prepared to cater for the long haired frustrates of the community nor for the poseur. Our job is to provide entertainment for seven million Australians." After paying his disrespects to those who profess to find enjoyment in music "composed by a blind German or a mad Russian," he remarked that "Bing Crosby has entertained more people musically than any other man who has ever lived." Conservatives, on the other hand, see Australia flooded by "cheap American music," and can hardly believe their ears when an Ormandy arrives in their midst. The result of this system is an unproductive deadlock between highbrow and lowbrow, instead of a stimulating rivalry between two networks of well-balanced programs.

New Zealand, also in character, follows the lead of Britain. (In order of diminishing loyalty to the Crown, the Dominions might be ranged as New Zealand, Australia, Canada, South Africa, and indubitably last, Eire.) Radio is a government monop-

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The first two of the above volumes retail at $2.50 each; the third is $2.75.

The Vanguard Press

oly in New Zealand. Five stations, however, carry advertising, and the remaining eight do not. The result is apparently even more stodgy than with the BBC. One interesting development, however, is the realization there of Senator Claude Pepper's proposal in Congress to broadcast the daily work of a nation's lawmakers. The visitor's gallery in Parliament is thus thrown open to a million and a half people every afternoon and three hours in the evening. Among the country people, listening in has become almost a daily habit, despite the blandishment of alternate programs; anticipation of "a lively night" has the same effect upon numbers as a World's Series with us. Popular interest in government, and acquaintance with both personalities and issues, have greatly quickened during these nine years. One often hears the previous night's debates discussed in trams, pubs, and clubs. Most New Zealanders now regard these broadcasts as an indispensable extension of the democratic process, a vital part of their citizenship. The unicameral structure of their elective government, the compactness of a small country, and the singular good luck of the NZBS in escaping the consequences of defamatory remarks sent over its facilities, all have worked for success.

On the other hand, results are not perfect. Speakers jockey for position at the best listening hours; knowledge that every utterance is a campaign speech tends to make them long-winded. The Director of the NZBS told me he has frequently observed that, so long as the red light shines over the speaker's desk—indicating Parliament is on the air—issues have a way of prolonging themselves by fireworks and harangue. But when Parliament goes off the air at 10:30 p.m., controversy often evaporates, interest flags, and business is settled quickly. Furthermore, crossfire and interjection when picked up by the six microphones in the House sound more frivolous, or more violent, than when heard *in situ*. This fosters more public interest than respect. New Zealand now has probably fewer illusions about its statesmen than any other country. Hesitation, poor speech, bad grammar, mispronunciation, repetition of phrases and sentences — usually ironed out in the press and the official record—come over the air with startling clarity, along with hawking and coughing in the Chamber. A report on the New Zealand experiment prepared for Australia's parliament last October by the chairman of the ABC, R. J. F. Boyer, stated: "It is even claimed that certain members of the House have progressively lost support in their electorate owing to their poor showing on the air." By reason of this sobering thought, Mr. Boyer told me, the Australian House voted not to put itself on the air until after the elections to be held this year.

Broadcasting the more important debates in our Congress would have mildly revolutionary effects—in the style of oratory and argument, the tempo of business, and the inevitable personal comparisons. It would certainly increase the familiarity of many Americans with their lawmakers, as well as the immediacy of public issues, and (if New Zealand's experience is typical) promote a more critical attitude by the electorate. In a democracy, this would seem to be a healthy development.

The Criminal Record

The Saturday Review's Guide to Detective Fiction

Title and Author	*Crime, Place and Sleuth*	*Summing Up*	*Verdict*
BLONDE'S REQUIEM *Raymond Marshall* (Crown: $2.)	New York shamus hired to solve disappearance of 3 maidens in tough Midwestern town. He encounters more murders and solves all.	Private eye who can, and does, take plentiful punishment finds equal in girl detective. They join hands and win—in a grave-yard end.	Extra-tough
LETS KILL GEORGE *Lucy Cores* (Duell, Sloan and Pearce: $2.50.)	A moral and unscrupulous playwright fatally slugged with "Oscar". This puts helpless maiden in tough spot but playwright's saturnine son saves her.	Life among Connecticut artists and writers set down in vitriol. Two murders, some pretty priceless characters and an unexpected solution.	Admirable
MURDER FOR THE MILLIONS *Editor—Frank Owen* (Fell: $2.)	Gargantuan collection of murder stories by American and English authors.	A great deal of very good stuff, much of it not previously reprinted . . a grand bedside book.	Recommended.

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The New Recordings

COMPOSITION, PERFORMER, ALBUM NUMBER, NUMBER OF RECORDS	ENGINEERING		REMARKS
	Balance	*Surface*	
RACHMANINOFF, CONCERTO #2 Gyorgy Sandor; N. Y. Philharmonic Rodzinski. Columbia M 606 (4) $4.75 *Earlier versions:* Rachmaninoff; Phila. Orch. Stokowski. (1929) Victor M 58 (5) $5.75	Dull and confused recording, details blurred. Piano somewhat metallic.	B+	Remarkable case where 17-year-old recording beats the newest—yet best version of all is out of print. Ask your dealer for M 666— Victor should re-press it. *(See below)*
	Better clarity than above, though lacking in highs. Piano lacks bass.	B	
Moiseivitch; London Phil. Walter Goehr. Victor M 666 (4) $4.75 *Out of print*	Best by big margin: better orchestral perspective; piano fuller, rounder, more bass.	A—	
D'INDY, "ISTAR" VARIATIONS San Francisco Symp. Monteux. Victor SP 16 (2) $2.25	Realism, instrumental balance excellent. But loud parts overmodulated; light pick-up will skip grooves.	Irreg. A to B+	Another in the notable series of French recordings with Monteux. Add this to your Franck, Berlioz, Debussy corner. Typical heavy French Romantic.

RACHMANINOFF

THE new Rachmaninoff Second Piano Concerto made by Gyorgy Sandor (see relisting above) highlights an interesting situation. Since its first reviewing I have been able to compare it directly with two other outstanding recordings of the same music with results which can be confirmed by any listener.

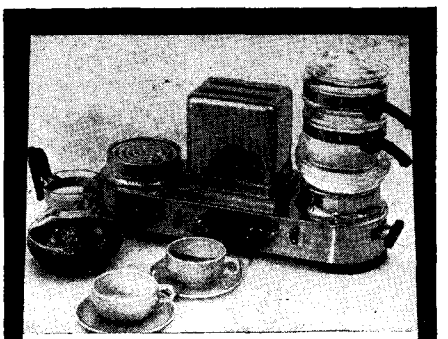
The standard (and best selling) version of the concerto is played by Rachmaninoff himself with the Philadelphia and Stokowski in Victor M 58. That recording, made all of seventeen years ago, stands up remarkably today; in fact, it proves better listening technically than the brand new Sandor recording. Which goes to show that even with seventeen years of progress the recording art is still a difficult and delicate one, with abysmal lapses always possible.

But the situation is complicated (and spiced!) by the dark horse version by Moiseivitch with the London Philharmonic in Victor M 666. Without the slightest doubt (again speaking technically) this recording outshines both the others. There is no comparison. The concerto is by nature somewhat turgid; in the Moiseivitch recording the music comes through with profoundly greater clarity and the piano is better reproduced. Musically speaking the differences are not as great; the old Rachmaninoff is no doubt the best, but I find Moiseivitch just about as good. The Sandor-Rodzinski performance is on the cold side, faster in tempo, more short with the romance (and what is left in Rachmaninoff without that?). Without much doubt on a blindfolded test most listeners would pick Moiseivitch, Rachmaninoff, and last, Sandor.

Therefore it is astonishing to find that the Moiseivitch album has been out of print for some time and apparently never sold well from the beginning. Which I suppose puts me on a limb, the implication being that I'm wrong about it. I can only say, listen for yourself. In a recent broadcast version of this column the three recordings were compared in sequence with convincing results.

The conclusion is twofold: that the public prefers a safe, authentic recording (by the composer) and hasn't the time, knowledge, or energy to go through the necessary comparisons with unknown dark horses; and that Victor, like other companies, also puts most of its sales punch into the "name brand" recordings. We all know that good names often sell bad recordings, but it's not often that a case as clear as this comes up to prove the fallacy of second-hand information. If Victor and Columbia had the courage they could make enormously better use of their hidden assets. It is hardly consistent policy in any case to issue as many "non-name" recordings as these companies do (thank heaven) and then to let them die from inattention. How about the right hand getting together with the left, Victor—how about giving us M 666 again and publicizing it?

EDWARD TATNALL CANBY.



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The Silent Ones

CENTURIES ago some ancient philosopher spoke of animals as "the silent ones"; not because they make no noise, but because they cannot share with human beings their opinion of one another and of man. And yet there are many stories of animals who talk—according to man's interpretation. Children find endless amusement in the tales of conversations among animals. In one of our oldest records, the Sanscrit "Panchatantra," they will listen with great interest to the story of a jungle conference called to get rid of the brutal, stupid lion, Numskull, who is preying on the smaller animals. It is the superior intelligence of a little rabbit that finally destroys him, and thus sets a pattern for one of the most familiar themes in folk literature.

Another tale that they will chuckle over is the Gullah "Black Genesis" story of a convention held at a time when animals had no tails. It was called to elect a messenger who would go to the Lord and ask Him for these useful appendages. As it is recorded by Dr. Stoney and Miss Shelby, this affair was singularly like a modern political gathering. There were lobbying, trading of favors, and much futile discussion. In the end a "dark horse" was elected—mild, gentle Sis' Nannygoat. Whereupon the Rabbit, who was sure that he would be the messenger, went off into the bushes and sulked. And, talking of politics, has there ever been in all history a cleverer or more successful politician than Reynard the Fox?

Children love the animals who talk to men, like Puss-in-Boots in France and the Little Humpbacked Horse in Russia. They also love the animals who talk to one another, like Peter Rabbit in England and Little Georgie on Rabbit Hill in Connecticut. It is a pity that there is today so much burlesque of animals. It is easy enough to make them appealing and humorous without distortion. Children turn easily from really creative fantasy to realism. The boys and girls who laugh as little children over Little Black Sambo and his tigers will turn when they grow older with sober respect and admiration to the man-eaters that Jim Corbett trailed and killed in India.

The more that they *know* about animals, either wild or tame, the better. The humane qualities that made Scotty Allan a great trainer of dogs and horses are inherent in most children; they need only to be directed and developed. Give boys and girls the right basis and they will enter gladly into the contract between man and beast that, according to Rudyard Kipling, was first made in the Garden of Eden. Men like Scotty Allan and Jim Corbett and Joel Goss, who trained the first of the Morgan horses, set a standard for the relationship between men and animals that young people will be proud to live up to. They soon learn that a good dog or a good horse knows instinctively when he is dealing with a coward or with a man who fails to keep his word.

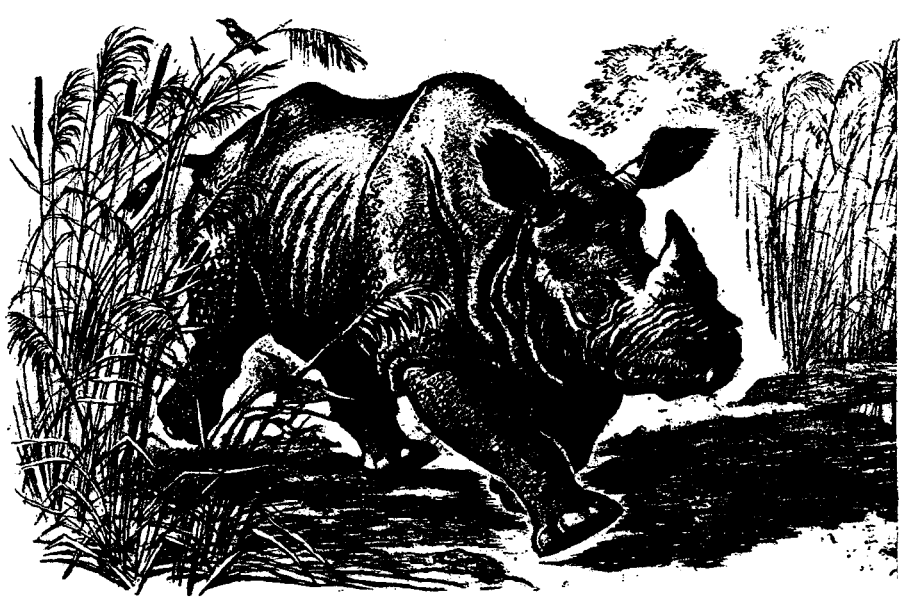
In this coming summer there may be many boys and girls who will learn for the first time really to know an animal. The right books will help them to gain the most from what can be a thrilling experience.

MARY GOULD DAVIS.

Dog Trainer

SCOTTY ALLAN: KING OF THE DOG-TEAM DRIVERS. By Shannon Garst. Illustrated by Dan Sweeney. New York: Julian Messner. 1946. 229 *pp.* $2.50.

THE first part of this true story will warm the heart of anyone who knows the sheep-dogs of Scotland. Allan Alexander Allan, known later all over the North American continent as Scotty, was born on a farm near Rothes in Scotland. The first dog that he trained was a shepherd, Dandy, who won the famous Cambrian Stakes. Allan Alexander Allan was a little boy then, but he could demonstrate already his uncanny understanding of dogs and horses and his power to make them useful and happy members of a community. He was nine-



—From "Life Through the Ages."

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teen when he was sent to America as an escort to a valuable Clydesdale stallion, a gift from a Scotsman to his son who lived in South Dakota. That journey is alone worth the price of admission that this book asks.

Having completed his mission, Scotty looked around him and decided to make this new land his home. He settled down, married his pretty, efficient Ellen, and became the father of a son. Then, in the late nineties, the rush to the Klondike began. Scotty said goodbye to Ellen and his baby and started north. Here the saga of Scotty's famous dogs begins. Dubby, Jack MacMillan, Baldy, and the others come into the story to dominate it until the end. The "crazy, glamorous, tragic, glorious, heart-breaking epoch" of Dawson and Nome is well told; Scotty meets men like Robert W. Service and Jack London; but the interest centers on the dogs, on the All-Alaska Sweepstakes and the races that made the little blue-eyed Scotsman known from the Atlantic to the Pacific and from the northernmost fringe of the Arctic to the borders of Mexico.

When the First World War came, Scotty took four hundred of the trained dogs to Europe to work for our Army in the Vosges Mountains—the first of the "K9" units. He prophesied that they would be needed again—and was right in his prophecy. Knowing the north as he did, Scotty felt sure that a day would come when we would have trouble with the Japanese in the Aleutians. He was an old man then. Just six days before the attack on Pearl Harbor, December 1, 1941, he died at his home in California.

His story as Shannon Garst tells it is an American saga. This indomitable little Scotsman belongs with the heroes of North America.

M.G.D.

O Pioneers!

COME, JACK! by Robert W. McCulloch. Illustrated by Duncan Coburn. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co. 1946. 203 pp. $2.50.

JACK was a dog of independent spirit. He cared little about obeying man, even the one to whom he was most loyal. But when he had business of his own to attend to he stuck to it with patience and determination until it was accomplished. Should any harm threaten a child or a person to whom he felt he owed allegiance, he lost no time making *that* his business.

John Joslyn had always been Jack's master. Although on the morning that John set off for the Great Plains Jack had important

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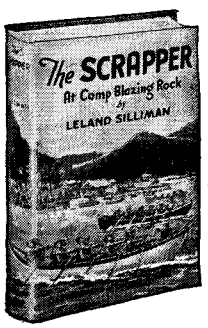

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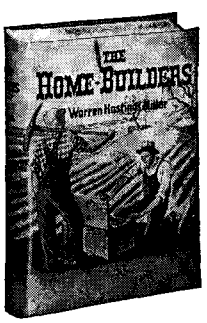

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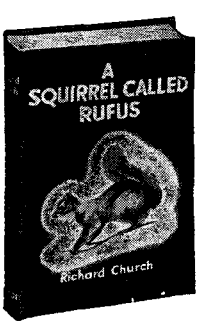

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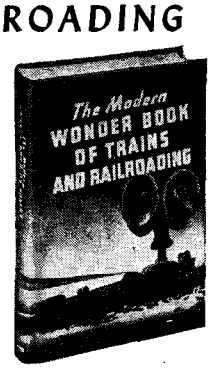

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business with a squirrel and was a day late in starting, he persisted until he traced and found John. Slow, gentle John was an easy prey for a thief named Dodd—and Jack was securely chained to his wagon. Dodd's brutality soon made Jack vicious, but there came a day when a foolhardy, trusting boy named Roddy brought a ray of kindness back into Jack's life. When he managed to escape from Dodd, he stayed near Roddy's home while he made plans to set off again and hunt for his master—and for Dodd.

In the search for Dodd, who was wanted for murder as well as for theft, the trail led Jack through plains and villages and finally to the settlement of his score with the man that he hated. In the meantime Jack had been with Roddy's family through some of a pioneer's most tragic and harrowing experiences; a prairie fire, a plague of grasshoppers. He had protected the chickens from coyotes, he had saved Roddy from a rattlesnake. When he finally found John again—the master for whom he had yearned so long—he could not easily turn away from Roddy's family. For them he felt responsibility as well as loyalty.

Jack is a dog to be long remembered. His personality and his fine intelligence are understood and interpreted here with restraint and sensitiveness and completely without sentimentality. The reader feels that he is seeing pioneer days in Nebraska through the eyes and brains of a dog, uncluttered, direct, lacking certain nuances perhaps, but sharp and true. This is not only a dog story that can stand with the best, it is a pioneer story, bringing out with starkness and severity the courage, tenacity, and humor of the pioneers.

RUTH A. HILL.

Lost Dog

THE WILD DOG OF EDMONTON. By David Grew. New York: Reynal & Hitchcock. 1946. 189 *pp.* $2.

DAVID GREW has given us a rather strange sandwich of wheat and chaff in "The Wild Dog of Edmonton." The introductory and the concluding chapters are awkward and unconvincing. But the main part of the story moves quickly and with a well-sustained pace. Young people will find the plucky trek of young Dwight and his dog through the inhospitable Canadian forests completely absorbing. Exceptionally well done is the author's account of the adventures of Whitepaw, Dwight's loyal dog, when he finds himself alone in Edmonton. The petting and affection, the companionship and fun

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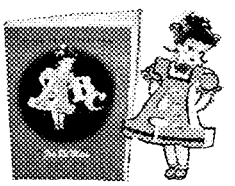

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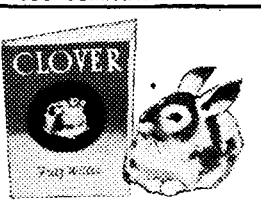

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that had been his since puppyhood gave him no weapon against the unfriendly people, the hostile dogs, the bitter, shelterless cold. Obviously the author is a dog-lover. He knows how a dog acts and thinks. He is not always able, however, to make his readers see into Whitepaw's mind. The illustrations are competently drawn by Ellen Segner.

MARIAN KING.

About Vicki

VICKI, A GUIDE DOG. Written and Illustrated by Margaret S. and Helen Lossing Johnson. New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co. 1946. 87 *pp.* $2.

WITH the large, clear type and interpretative drawings that have distinguished the other books by these artists, this book tells the story of a boxer who was taken to England as a puppy by an American flyer. Captain Baker was shot down over France and Vicki was very unhappy for a while. Then she was taken back to America and turned over to Captain Baker's sister in New York. She was well cared for but she missed the affection and trust that her master had given her. It was an adventure to be sold to a

—From "Vicki, a Guide Dog."

professional dog trainer and share the life of a travelling circus. And then Vicki was sold again, this time to Seeing Eye headquarters in New Jersey. There is an interesting description of her training and her final assignment to Edward Stewart, who was blinded in the war. Vicki had things to overcome and things to learn before there was perfect understanding between her and her master. In the end she settles down as a valued and useful companion and guide, thoroughly at home on a pleasant Virginia farm. The delicate pencil drawings of Vicki and her friends and their background are beautifully reproduced in this attractive volume.

M. G. D.

Reg'lar Dogs

DOGS. By Gene Byrnes. New York: Grosset & Dunlap. 1946. 64 *pp.* $1.

AS everyone knows, Gene Byrnes is the creator of "Reg'lar Fellers." Here they are in this book, pages and pages of them, printed in color on good paper that makes them seem even more alive and amusing than they are in the newspapers. And here, too, are excellent photographs of the different breeds of dogs with a descriptive text that is as lively and as individual as the characters in the famous comic strip. The photographs are printed in a silvery gray, and some of them are beautiful. There is a head of a bloodhound that one longs to take out of the book and hang on the wall, neatly framed. Of him Gene Byrnes says: "The sad-faced fellow who looks as if he were going to burst out crying any minute is a one-hundred percent genuine bloodhound."

There is a good deal of wise comment and advice in these sketches. One feels that Gene Byrnes knows dogs well and loves them but is not

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The gay rabbits that decorate this page are among the many amusing animals that were friends of Winky the scarecrow, who is the hero of this tale and King of the Garden. $1.00

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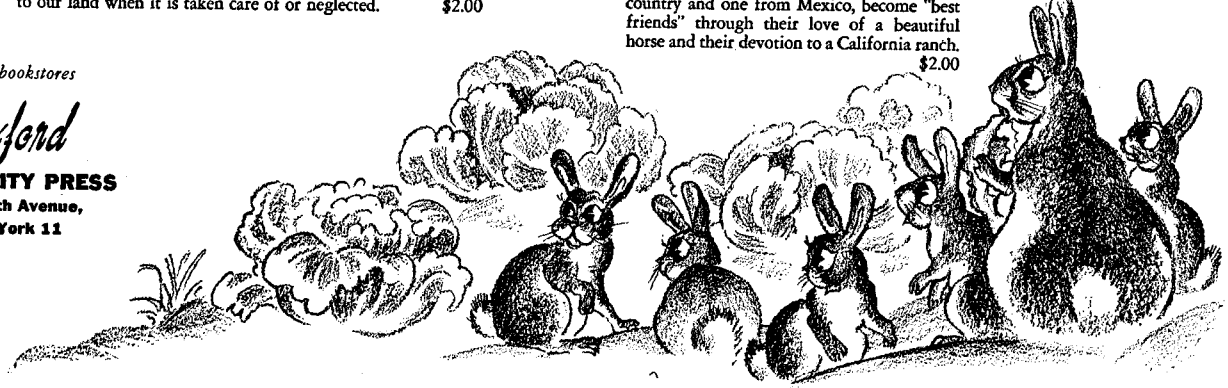

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Wakaima and the Clay Man

By
ERNEST BALINTUMA KALIBALA
and MARY GOULD DAVIS

Full of humor, having the strange simplicity of a child's own story, these are authentic folk tales of the Baganda Tribe of East Africa. Reminiscent in many ways of *Uncle Remus,* the stories are not in dialect. Illustrated by Avery Johnson. Ages 9-12. $2.00

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EDITED BY ANDREW LANG
FOREWORD BY
MARY GOULD DAVIS

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By STEPHEN HOLT

No lover of westerns could possibly resist this grand, galloping tale of Des Harmon's adventures with the "biggest gold horse in the world." Des discovers a lost mine and takes part in a rodeo. Decorations by W. C. Nims. Ages 10-14. $2.00

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New York 3

—From "Justin Morgan Had a Horse."

sentimental about them. The humor that makes a good master from a dog's point of view runs all through these pages. In describing the wire-haired terrier he says: "It would be more descriptive if he were called a *live-wire*-haired fox terrier, for of all the lively, active energetic dogs in all creation, the wire-haired fox terrier takes the gold medal." In illustrating the qualities of collies he tells a charming story about Jeddo, who took over full responsibility for a New Hampshire farmer's herd of cattle.

This is a book that is sure to be demanded by boys and girls for two reasons. It gives them their favorite comic strip characters in a permanent form, and it tells them all that they need to know to be happy and successful masters of happy dogs.

M. G. D.

Morgan's Horse

JUSTIN MORGAN HAD A HORSE. By Marguerite Henry. Illustrations by Wesley Dennis. Chicago: Wilcox & Follett Co. 1945. 88 *pp.* $2.50.

THIS is the true biography of the sire of the famous Morgan horses. It begins on a farm near Springfield, Massachusetts, toward the close of the eighteenth century. Justin Morgan, the "singing schoolteacher," was on his way back to the Green Mountains of Vermont with a small, thin little boy—Joel Goss. He stopped at a farm near Springfield to collect a debt and there Joel saw the sturdy little colt who was to become the Morgan sire. Joel called him "Little Bub," and the friendship begun that day lasted for many years.

Of the two colts taken by Justin Morgan in payment of the debt, Little Bub was the less valuable. Back in Randolph, Vermont, Joel was allowed to "gentle" him until he was thoroughly broken. Then Justin Morgan died and Bub passed into other hands. Through the years his courage, his extraordinary strength, his intelligence, and his staying power were amply proved. The tests varied from log-pulling to racing, and as often as possible Joel was in the audience. Then, for a time, Joel lost sight of him. The War of 1812 came, and Joel fought as one of the Green Mountain Boys. America settled down to peace.

One night, in front of the Chase Inn, Joel heard a familiar whinny. He knew that it was Bub. Going out into the wintry night he found him—old now and thin and shaggy and ill-used. Joel bought him and brought him back to vigorous maturity. He became the sire of the Morgan horses, and they gave him his first master's name—Justin Morgan. He carried President James Monroe on his back, stepping proudly with the eyes of his world upon him. It is a happy ending to a grand tale.

It is a large book, well bound with a cover-jacket in color and many interpretative drawings by Wesley Dennis.

M. G. D.

Killers

MAN-EATERS OF KUMAON. By Jim Corbett. New York: Oxford University Press. 1946. 235 *pp.* $2.

FOR thirty-two years in the foothills of the Himalayas in northern India, whenever a man-eating tiger attacked the villagers, the headman sent for Jim Corbett—just as we send for a doctor when a deadly disease attacks a member of a community. A letter asking Jim Corbett to come and kill the man-eater of Kanda is reproduced on page 166 of this record. It is an extraordinary document. It assumes that if Jim Corbett comes, the tiger will be killed. It assures him that every member of the community shares this conviction: "This is the voice of all the public here that this tiger also will be killed only by you. So we, the public, venture to request that you very kindly take trouble to come to this place and shoot this tiger (our enemy) and save the public from this calamity."

Jim Corbett came and he killed the man-eating tiger of Kanda. But his triumph was tinged with regret. Looking down at the body of the splendid beast that had taken its toll of human life for fifteen years he thought: "Never again will the jungle folk and I listen with held breath to his deep-throated call resounding through the foothills, never again will his familiar pug marks show on the paths that he and I have trod for fifteen years." He champions even the man-eaters. Gently he criticizes authors who use such terms as "cruel as a tiger." To him tigers are "large hearted gentlemen with boundless courage." He explains exactly why some of them become man-eaters. He

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takes us with him on seven of those long, patient, nerve-racking treks to find and destroy the criminal who has turned to man for his food.

There is a curiously moving chapter devoted to his dog, Robin. "He was rising three months then," Corbett says, "and I bought him for fifteen rupees. He is rising thirteen years now and all the gold in India would not buy him." There is a chapter on fishing, filled with sensitive word pictures of the hill country as it is seen through eyes that know and understand every living thing in it. But to young people the great thrill is in the stalking of the man-eaters, in Corbett's endless patience and endurance, his selflessness, his skill and authority, his instinctive admiration for the animal that he has set out to destroy.

Incidentally, one learns much of the hill tribes of India and of their relation to the government in Jim Corbett's story. These men who so trusted and admired him proved themselves excellent soldiers in two world wars. Reading this honest account of them, free as it is of any political implication, one wonders about the future. It is a revealing book and a very exciting one. It is well bound and printed with a stunning cover-jacket. The photographs are admirable.

M. G. D.

Old Animals

LIFE THROUGH THE AGES. Written and Illustrated by Charles R. Knight. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. 1946. 67 *pp.* $2.

THIS is a "picture-science story of prehistoric animal life." Its tone is informative rather than imaginative. Often the modern representative of the animal described is pictured, as well as the animal who was its ancestor. There is a fearsome, fantastic element in the gigantic and often grotesque creatures that are portrayed. Out-of-door life in the country today seems mild and colorless in comparison with prehistoric days, but vastly more comfortable and practicable. Here is the huge but peaceful prehistoric sloth; the better-known but fearsome dinosaur twenty feet high but with practically no brains; birds with teeth inherited from reptile ancestors, one with a head as big as a horse but wings too small to fly; the earliest horse, a miniature creature only twelve inches high who survived his enemies because he was so swift. There was a surprising resemblance, if one goes back far enough, between the horse, the tapir and the rhinoceros. These pictures with a graphic text for each fill a slim book which will interest a little child and satisfy older boys and girls. It is another example of a book that shows how well authors and artists have learned to take advantage of the sources that science has put at their disposal.

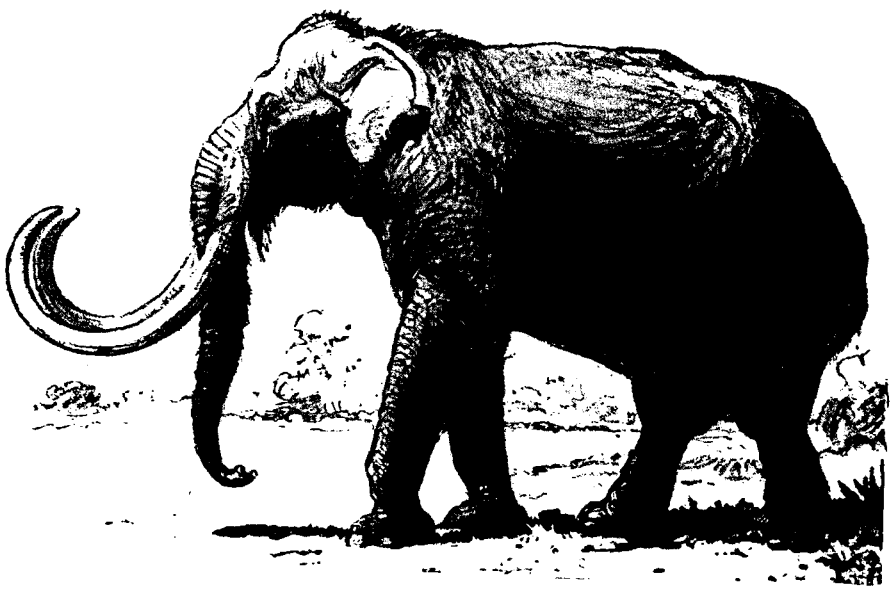
MARION C. DODD.

Jungle Folk

JUNGLE ANIMALS. By Frank Buck. Written with Ferrin Fraser. New York: Random House. 1945. 56 *pp.* $1.50.

HERE are the animals, birds, and snakes that Frank Buck of "Bring 'em Back Alive" encountered in his travels. Many of them he sold to museums and zoos here in the United States. There are many pictures in black and white and in color and a short, factual description of each one.

M. G. D.



—*From "Jungle Animals."*

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For four generations American boys and girls have been reading and loving Louisa May Alcott's stories of the March family. Now, with this handsomely illustrated new editon of LITTLE WOMEN, LITTLE MEN and JO'S BOYS in two uniform volumes, today's children may have these cherished classics in a form they can treasure.

Elinore Blaisdell, whose pictures for FALCON, FLY BACK won her the Julia Ellsworth Ford Foundation prize, has drawn twelve full-page illustrations in full color and twelve in black and white for each volume. This is the first time the publishers have offered an edition of Miss Alcott's stories illustrated by a modern artist in the rich color obtainable through modern offset printing.

The set, boxed, $5.00

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the Phoenix Nest

I AM glad to know that my recent request for more light upon the late Arthur Cosslett Smith was answered in Henry W. Clune's column, *Seen and Heard,* in the Rochester *Democrat & Chronicle.* A gentleman named E. G. Miner wrote in to say (and I quote):

Mr. Smith was born in Lyons, the son of Supreme Court Justice James Cosslett Smith and Mrs. Smith. He received an appointment to the United States Military Academy, where he remained one year. Later he was graduated from Hobart College and still later received his law degree from Columbia University.

He married Elizabeth Storer Atkinson, daughter of Hobart F. Atkinson, of this city, whose sister was the late Mrs. Ernest R. Willard (the late Mr. Willard at one time was editor of this newspaper) in 1870 and began the practice of law in this eity that same year. In time he built the house at 6 Sibley Place, directly behind the Willard home (now called Woodside) in East Avenue, and lived there many years.

A man of independent means, Mr. Smith worked only desultorily at the law and literature. He was a member of a small group of Rochester intellectuals headed by the late Sherlock Andrews, several of whom met at 5 o'clock every afternoon at the Genesee Valley Club, when the clubhouse was located at East Avenue and Gibbs Street.

In the later years of his life, continues Mr. Clune, Mr. Smith traveled extensively abroad with his wife, who was ill. He still maintained his home here, and Mr. Miner says that his death occurred in Rochester. His son, the late Gordon Smith, made some reputation as a writer of fiction, and although his output considerably exceeded that of his father's, his talent was not comparable.

* * *

I am glad to print the following tribute to Evelyn Waugh, with apologies to another great English writer:

(Evelyn Waugh: An Answer to the Ladies all over the U.S.A. . . . who have been kind enough to write to Evelyn Waugh about his recent novel. "I find I have written a 'best seller'. . . . English women do not write letters to men they do not know. I have momentarily become an object of curiosity to Americans and I find they believe that my friendship and confidence are included in the price of the book."—*Life*—April 8, 1946.)

Beautiful Evelyn Waugh is read!
  Sit and write to him for an hour.
Here is a pencil with lots of lead;
  I've plucked a piece of passion flower,
Turning to red, too, as I write;
  Little has yet been changed, I think.
Englishwomen are silent, quite,—
  But we must tell him of friendship's link.

Forty-two when he wrote this book!
  And he has never heard our names.
He has no time for Americans,—look!
  He has no use for inquisitive flames.
But the time will come—at last it will,
  When, Evelyn Waugh, you will turn our way,
When your spirit's fire is cold and chill
  And your English friends begin to stray.

We love you, Evelyn, all the while.
  Your heart seems full as it can hold?
No indeed! for God's great smile
  Creates a fire when it is cold!

So hush—we give you letters to keep.
  We send them fast to your sweet cold hand.
Whatever we say, just go to sleep!
  You will wake and remember us . . . *Understand?*

FLORENCE PAGE JAQUES.

* * *

ATTENTION PHOENIX NEST

DEAR SIR:

In your column, April 6 Number, you refer to comment of B. Wendell Goodwin of Famous Circus Features, on the Alger books. I am an ardent Alger admirer—I recollect at the age of ten, a "new" uncle entered my family—He was in the book publishing business and impressed upon me that I might have any books at all, and it was all he could do to tear me away from saying "only Alger books"—I remember Tattered Tom and Phil the Fiddler. I don't think Tattered Tom is in that anthology of Alger which I intend to get. I have tried two or three bookhunters in vain.

I thought of writing B. Wendell Goodwin but would not know how to reach him. [I have lost his address: W. R. B.]

If you can help me at all, I would appreciate it immensely—and of course, at your convenience.

And thank you, anyway.

MARJORIE VAN PATTEN.

Tattered Tom was the girl-boy who sold matches and had a drunken granny who would beat her if all the matches weren't sold—to illustrate the extent the book affected me—I would stand in front of my mirror and think I was Tattered Tom having to sell this very last box of matches on a cold night or else—and actual tears would stream down the cheeks!

* * *

THE ADVENTURES OF ID

"Oh you kid!"
Shouted Id.
"Take it easy, amigo,"
Muttered Ego.

"Babe, we'll take the lid
Off the town!" said Id.
"What will folks say in Oswego?"
Said Ego.

"Babe, let's get rid
Of this killjoy," said Id.
"If I go, will she go?"
Said Ego.

Vast and calm and politic,
Super-ego swung his stick.
Super-ego turned his head:
"You boys better get back to bed."
"Well, I never did,"
Said Id.

MORRIS BISHOP.

* * *

The latest communiqué from EARLE WALBRIDGE:

I saw "Harvey" at the third try, and was interested in the similarities (purely coincidental, and first pointed out to me by Mrs. Richard Oliver)

Two outstanding books for boys and girls

●

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by Alicia Street

With a fine gift of selection, and freshness of style, Mrs. Street presents a vivid interpretation of England's history, her people and her countryside. Illustrated from photographs. Ages 11 to 18. $2.00

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between the play and a short story published in *Scribner's* for November 1937, and now to be found in Julius Fast's anthology, "Out of This World" (Penguin). In the story, "Mr. Mergenthwirker's Lobblies," by Nelson S. Bond, Mr. M. has two green familiars named Japheth and Henry, who sit with him in bars and are invisible to the uninitiate. To Elwood P. Dowd, his Pooka; to Mr. Mergenthwirker, his Lobblies; and to Barnaby's Mr. O'Malley, his leprechaun, whose name, if any, I forget.

Ready for more duplicated book titles? Take a long breath. "The Snake Pit," by Mary Jane Ward, and "The Snake Pit," by Sigrid Undset (1929). "The Power and the Glory," by Grace MacGowan Cooke (1910), Sir Gilbert Parker (1925), Phyllis Bentley (1940), and Graham Greene (1940 in England, 1946 here). They're fond of it. "The Keys of the City," by Oscar Graeve (Century, 1916); ditto, Elmer Davis (1925). Mr. Davis's "Strange Woman" (1927), is echoed by Ben Ames Williams's "The Strange Woman" (1941). John van Druten wrote a play based on the Rattenbury murder, "Leave Her to Heaven" (1940), and Ben Ames Williams includes a supposed murder in his "Leave Her to Heaven" (1944). "The Touchstone" (1900), is by Edith Wharton; B.A.W. used the title in 1930. One of his novels is "The Crucible" (1937); Mark Lee Luther had the title first (1907). In 1945 appeared "You Are the One," by Berta Ruck (a great friend of E. Nesbit's) and "You Are the One" by Rob Eden (Robert and Eve Burckhardt). Miss Elizabeth Cooley, who reported that to me, said she placed them side by side on a bookshelf, as the least she could do. When Anya Seton's "The Turquoise" was published this year, a serial of the same name by Charles Morgan was running in *Good Housekeeping*. "The Red House," by E. Nesbit (1903), and "The Red House," by George Agnew Chamberlain (1945).

Lastly, "The Golden Violet," by Letitia Elizabeth Landon (1802-1838), 1827, and "The Golden Violet," by Joseph Shearing (1936; Readers Club edition, 1943). That was intentional. Mrs. Gabrielle Long ("Shearing," "Marjorie Bowen," etc.), tells me that "The Golden Violet" owes something to the life of Letitia Landon," to any 'lady novelist' of a hundred years ago, and to an incident of that period when a half-caste of education was hanged for inciting the Negroes to a riot." In real life, Letitia Landon was found dead with a bottle of prussic acid clutched in her hand; the heroine of Shearing's "The Golden Violet" literally got away with murder. To complete the record, Mrs. Long says that "Joseph Shearing" was a pseudonym selected for her by the late Mr. Evans of Messrs. Heinemann, her publishers.

P.S. to Will Vance. I wrote the Wallace Stevens article in *Twentieth Century Authors*. One of the sources I used said Stevens's handwriting was "minute." Handwritings do change. E. F. W.

* * *

—And so I say, God bless my Contribs!

WILLIAM ROSE BENÉT.

In-Law Trouble

DEAD CENTER. By June Wetherell. New York: E. P. Dutton & Co. 1946. 255 pp. $2.50.

Reviewed by GRACE FRANK

WHEN a girl finds that she has married not only a spoiled husband but the whole doting clan of relatives who spoiled him, when she is constantly made to feel outnumbered and in the wrong, and when her husband's family veto everything from her way of managing her child to her desire to study art, it seems inevitable that her best efforts to achieve a successful marriage will be undermined. Nor is the situation helped when the girl exchanges her own happy-go-lucky Irish environment for the "smug Midwest stagnation," the "dead center" behavior, of a Scandinavian household in Minneapolis.

Phoebe Halloran might have put up with the ubiquitous cleanliness of Rolf Korsell's home, the "tight unchangeableness" of his people and their eternal preoccupation with food, if only she and Rolf could have lived in a place of their own or if he could have made her feel that he had married her for something besides sex. But in the one room in the house where they were able to be alone together, his sudden passionate onslaughts, accepted at first with answering desire, came in the end to spell only fear, monotony, and disgust.

And, too, their domestic tangle was further complicated by indebtedness to a dry, older sister, by the lovely, blond cousin Karla's adoration of Rolf, and by Jerry and Mac, outsiders and non-conformists like Phoebe, who naturally sympathized with her efforts to escape from the web of dull complacency in which she was trapped.

Simplified in this fashion, the novel seems to embrace many of the elements of a soap opera, but its workmanship and wise understanding of character, motive, and diversified backgrounds raise it to a much higher level. The telling, unpretentious though competent, sometimes lacks humor, and one frequently cited factor in Rolf's amorous technique is likely to catch the watchful eye of *The New Yorker*.

Nevertheless these characters are convincing people in recognizable situations, their typical American environments have been accurately photographed, and Miss Wetherell has put them into a likable, warmly human story.

PERSONALS

ADVERTISEMENTS will be accepted in this column for things wanted or unwanted; personal services to let or required; literary or publishing offers not easily classified elsewhere; miscellaneous items appealing to a special and intelligent clientele; jobs wanted, houses or camps for rent, tutoring, traveling companions, ideas for sale; communications of a decorous nature, expressions of opinion (limited to fifty lines). All advertisements must be consonant with the purpose and character of The Saturday Review. Ads of a strictly personal nature are limited to exchange of correspondence. Rates: 15 cents per word. Count two additional words for Box and Number. Rates for several insertions follow—26 insertions, 10c a word; 13 insertions, 12c a word; 6 insertions, 14c a word. Payment in full must be received fifteen days in advance of publication. We forward all mail received in answer to box numbers. Address Personals Department, The Saturday Review, 25 West 45 Street, New York 19, N. Y.

HAVE PLEASANT COTTAGE on large wooded area with stream for rent. Have use for two sincere people, well-bred, flexible—either or both, full or part-time. Property development, farming, secretarial, writing; also chemical and engineering work available nearby. An unusual choice of work. Write fully background, experience, interests. Connecticut 50 miles out. D 31 East 49 Street, N. Y. C.

YOUNG MAN, war delayed college sophomore seeks correspondence with sportive, refreshing, witty college girl. Box 890-P.

CIGARETTES—popular brands; minimum 3 cartons. Price $1.40 per carton, postpaid. Send check or money order. Ace Mail Order Co., East Orange 52, N. J.

MAGAZINE PUBLISHERS! Have you a periodical which is not receiving the benefits of a full and complete news stand distribution? We have established facilities for providing an intelligent distribution service through the independent wholesale dealers. Details submitted promptly. Box 774-P.

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CATALOG LIBRARIAN, good personality, vitality, ideas. Considerable circulation work in progressive library near Boston. Box 893-P.

SPANISH! SPANISH! SPANISH! Easily! Quickly! Exchange English for SPANISH with refined NATIVES. Practical. Economical. Write: LANGUAGE EXCHANGE CENTER, 1425 Broadway, New York 18.

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(Continued on page 48)

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PERSONALS

(Continued from page 47)

COLLEGE ENGLISH INSTRUCTOR, 34 male, single, master's degree, doctorate study, desires position, educational, publishing, any field, promising wider horizons, reasonable chance for advancement, greater satisfaction. Available June 1. Box 863-P.

DO YOU PAINT? Would you like a cascade of little water-falls dashing by your house? A 12-foot breezeway—a 16x16 foot studio with large fireplace—a living-room 20x24 foot with quaint old stairway in one corner? Your own garden in a lovely country-side? Available now. Owner—Prop. Overlea Inn, North Bennington, Vermont.

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POEMS WANTED for Musical Setting. Send poem for immediate consideration. Five Star Music Masters, 313 Beacon Building, Boston, Mass.

YOUNG LADY, interested people, places, books—desires summer position. Will travel. Box 897-P.

SOLITUDE-LOVING WOMAN ARTIST wants sequestered cottage for summer, within 3 hour drive New York City. Box 898-P.

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BOOKLOVING PARTNER wanted for mail order and export business in American books; $20,000 needed. Highest references, graduate European universities. Box 900-P.

INTERESTING, LIGHT SECRETARIAL WORK wanted in exchange for living expenses. Summer months. Box 901-P.

TWO COLLEGE GIRLS, sociable seniors, seek suggestions for satisfying summer season. Box 902-P.

SCULPTOR WILL DIVIDE HILL-TOP ESTATE near Brewster with person or couple of kindred tastes. Will sell large Tudor house and five acres bordering river, retaining nearby studio. Unspoiled locality with desirable neighbors. $25,000. Edmond Amateis, Brewster, N. Y.

HELP FOUND a great magazine "both timely and timeless." Join the Committee of One Hundred. Box 903-P.

HOPE SPRINGS ETERNAL! Mother and just discharged Navy son, driving east for daughter's graduation Wellesley College, (husband arriving later). Desirous of furnished apartment accommodating four, from June 4th to 18th within 20 miles of Wellesley, Mass. Box 884-P.

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"THE WORLD IS VERY ILL." Veteran, Lecture Agent, conscious of today's needs, desires contact organization or individual, in financial position to help create cultural lecture bureau. Box 905-P.

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WAC MEDIC, 36 single, Army trained laboratory technician—good background Hematology, Urinalysis, Serology, Parasitology, Metabolics; some Bacteriology and Chemistry, desires job first August. Two years training standard hospital school of nursing, ten years under-graduate experience. Type, keep books. Will establish permanent home with widowed mother in desirable location. Box 909-P.

REFINED LADY, resident of Middle West, welcomes male correspondence. Box 910-P.

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DON'T DESPAIR of finding that book. Instead, write Box 182-M.

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WANTED—Book shop within twenty-five miles north or west—Chicago. Box 673-P.

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VETERAN, PRINCETON GRAD seeks correspondence with charming gal. Box 826-P.

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DOUBLE-CROSTIC NO. 634

DEFINITIONS

A. Jaylike bird, green with blue, black, rufous markings (Mex. to Brazil).

B. Bookbinding style named for printer and publisher of 16th cent.

C. Any of seven Hindu sages turned into the bright stars of Ursa Major.

D. Chief Italian pre-Renaissance painter (1276-1337?).

E. Greatest painter of Greek antiquity (4th cent. B.C.)

F. *In a laughing manner.*

G. To disentangle; unfold; deduce.

H. American ornithologist and writer (1843-1912).

I. Military office created by act of Feb. 14, 1903.

J. On dangerous ground requiring wary action (3 wds.)

K. Waterfall, or cataract; ravine (Chiefly Scot.)

L. Ectropion (Med.)

M. "Field" where Richard III of England was slain.

N. Location of Boar's Head Inn, connected with Prince Hal and Falstaff (Shakespeare).

O. Battle of 455 between Britons and Saxons.

P. Pertaining to or containing sulphur (Chem.)

Q. The skilled artisans of the gods, bright as the sun, where they dwell (Vedic Myth.)

R. Third epoch in archaeologic time (2 wds.)

S. Resembling the horny substance of outer part of insects, crustaceans, etc.

T. Separation or purification of material by washing (Chem.)

U. Known as "the Kingmaker" (See "Henry VI" and "The Last of the Barons").

V. Abstract; summary; abridgment.

W. The last extremity, however painful or calamitous (2 wds.)

X. One's more virtuous, amiable, or kindly instincts (2 wds.)

WORDS

143 96 98 101 125 164

63 171 90 163 55 41

77 114 132 167 89

149 49 122 35 137 93

43 108 177 59 25 150 124

42 9 20 5 161 174 60

7 113 139 58 88 39

29 102 162 145 54 14

105 26 165 74 176 12 6 155 120 57 97 126

87 115 104 128 175 94 27 22 153

4 134 50 40

110 152 95 71 103 121 46 140

170 106 16 69 62 13 76 8

67 148 48 127 51 1 19 119 85

75 32 64 129 10 34 141 68 53

17 99 138 33 158 45 173

154 159 73 66 136 28

78 31 21 131 144 38 82

79 18 15 61 147 160 37 117 92

2 109 169 44 52 30 123

36 24 3 81 172 118 72

151 168 130 11 70 107 80

83 23 56 135 157 86 112 47 116

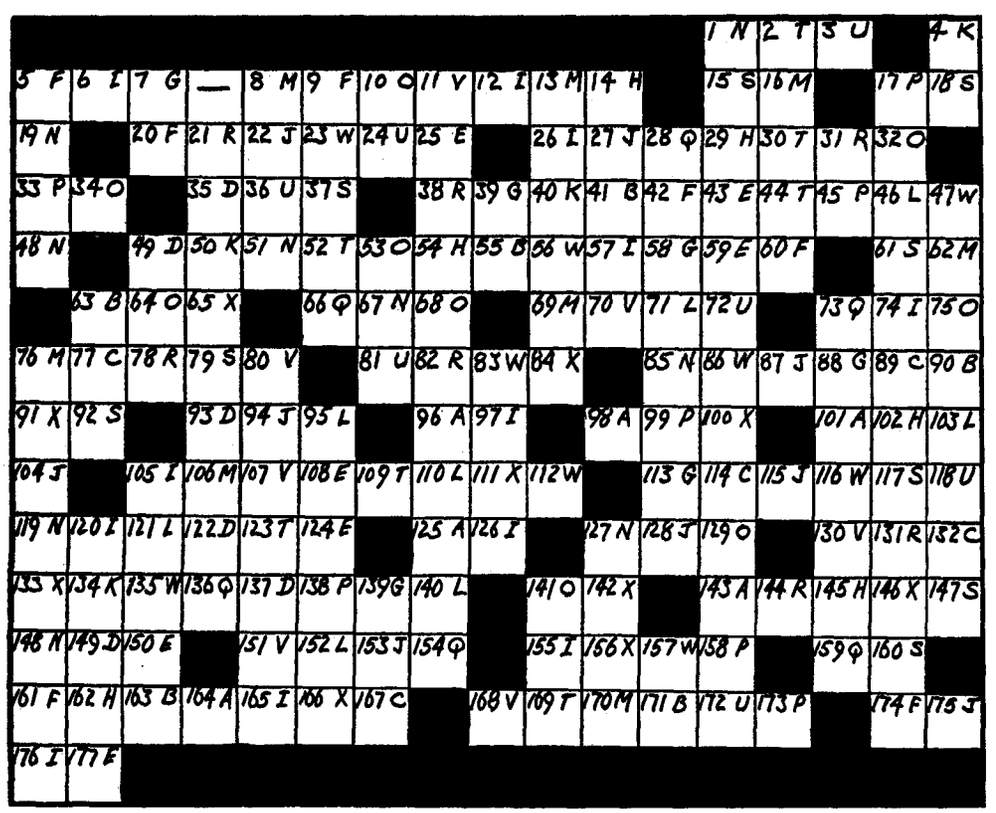
84 91 111 133 156 146 166 100 65 142

DIRECTIONS

To solve this puzzle you must guess twenty-odd words, the definitions of which are given in the column headed DEFINITIONS. The letters in each word to be guessed are numbered. These numbers appear under the dashes in the column headed WORDS. There is a dash for each letter in the required word. The key letters in the squares are for convenience, indicating to which word in the definitions each letter in the diagram belongs. When you have guessed a word, fill it in on the dashes; then write each letter in the correspondingly numbered square of the puzzle diagram. When the squares are all filled in you will find (by reading from left to right) a quotation from a famous author. Read up and down the letters mean nothing. The black squares indicate ends of words; words do not necessarily end at the right side of the diagram.

When the column headed WORDS is filled in, the initial letters spell the name of the author and the title of the piece from which the quotation has been taken. Authority for spelling and definitions is Webster's New International Dictionary (second edition).

The solution of last week's *Double-Crostic* will be found on page 11 of this issue.



The Crostics Club

By Elizabeth S. Kingsley

HOW that miracle of radio occasionally inadvertently supplements DCing either by supplying a needed word or by discussing a subject on our current agenda is illustrated by two recent notes: Adah A. Pratt, Elgin, Ill., had just tackled #629 and had filled in the words she thought she knew. At the same time she turned on the radio to "Cavalcade of America," and the answer to S. hit her in the face, *McGraw!* Mrs. Robinson Locke, New York, whose rich memories of stage and literary life are forever being supplemented from DCs or radio, was much amused, after our *boullabaisse* contention, to hear on "Information Please" a discussion over the difference between Boston and New York clam chowder. As a Bostonian she naturally chuckled over F. P. A.'s N. Y. variety as "just a clam and a caroway seed thrown into vegetable soup." Circumstances do alter cases. I recall how after my marriage and settlement in Cambridge, Mass., far from my Brooklyn family home, I sent an S.O.S. to my mother for her rich N. Y. clam chowder recipe, that was really clammy, as I couldn't abide hot milk with potatoes and not a clam that you'd know of!

Mrs. Guy H. Cochran, Pasadena, who has always taken DCs too seriously, was upset in #629 over the date 1885 after *The Story of a Short Life*, as the work of an English author. She thought it the birth date. While slips still occur my practice is to place a dash after dates if the author is still living and to give both birth and death dates if he is not. A single date refers to the fact in question.

If you are a friend of Rupert Hughes and are contemplating a letter of sympathy to him over that "fall on the stairs" I recently chronicled, don't send it. The following interprets my admonition but not my stupidity in misinterpreting his letter to me: "You remember Oliver Wendell Holmes' poem ending with the resolve 'never to be again as funny as I can' or words to that effect. . . . in discussing my wrestling match with *bouillabaisse*, I spoke of my stupidity as being due to a fall on the head—referring to the well-known saying that a dull man must have been dropped on his head in his infancy. How I misworded the wheeze I don't know but I received a letter of beautiful sympathy from you. And this morning when my drab Monday was gilded by the latest SRL, I read with dismay your very kind reference to my missing my footing on the stairs and going to the hospital. That was fine fiction based on my silly fiction." (Another evidence of *my* lack of erudition!)

Miss Pratt's way of spelling her first name with a final *h* reminds me that I have long wanted to know the source of that same name spelled thus, as the daughter of Jephthah whom, the Bible tells us (without giving her name), he sacrificed to the Lord as the final price for victory.

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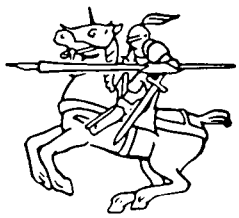

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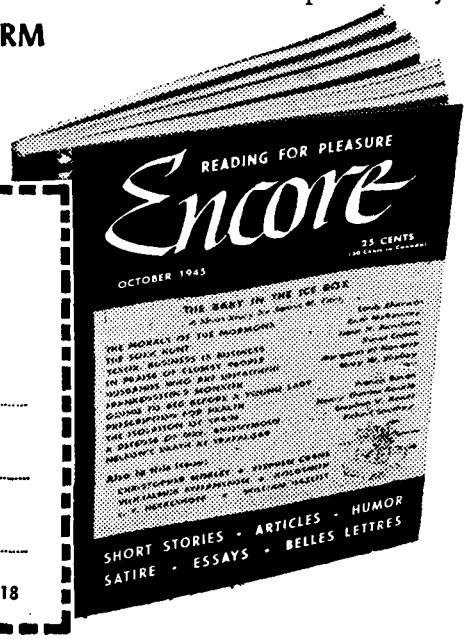

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